

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE
and Foreign Relations

THE VARIATION
OF AMERICAN
POLITICAL IDEAS
PERSONAL AND
GLOBAL

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE
and Foreign Relations

THE VARIETIES OF RELIGIOUS AND PSYCHICAL EXPERIENCES: PERSONAL AND GLOBAL

PROCEEDINGS

**The Academy of Religion and Psychical Research
28th Annual Conference**

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THE ACADEMY OF RELIGION AND PSYCHICAL RESEARCH
ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2003 PROCEEDINGS

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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

Boyce Batey
Executive Secretary

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INTRODUCTION

Boyce Batey

The conference of which this is the *Proceedings* dealt with "The Varieties of Religious and Psychical Experiences: Personal and Global", and honored the centennial of the publication of the classic *Varieties of Religious Experience* by the American philosopher and psychologist William James. In this book, James wrote, "The religious experience of the individual is the mothersea and fountainhead of all religion; beliefs and ritualisms are but accretions thereto." This view was explored at the conference.

In his keynote address, John Franklin Miller III, Ph.D., the former president of the Academy, set the tone for the remainder of the conference by sharing his personal conversion, meditative, channelling, ecstatic, and other insightful experiences. He encouraged us to seek within our own consciousness those psychic and religious experiences which can guide us toward the truth of the nature of reality.

In an open forum, audience members shared psychic and religious experiences such as lucid dreaming, electronic communication from a deceased friend, a woman attending her own funeral, healings from those in spirit, remote viewing, distant intercessory prayer and synchronicity.

James E. Beichler, Ph.D., the holder of the only Ph.D. in Paraphysics in the world from an accredited university, provided an excellent understanding of the evolution of science as it sought to explain the psychical aspects of human nature. As science has addressed spiritualism, parapsychology, paraphysics, consciousness and spirituality in turn, it has helped establish a growing variety of psychical experiences and brought corresponding changes in religious attitudes.

In his *tour de force* of the religious and psychical experiences of Emanuel Swedenborg over a 20 year period when at the age of 56, this remarkable Swedish scientist went through a life change to become a "mystic", Rev. Don Rose, assistant pastor of the Bryn Athyn Cathedral, gave us the kind of insights only a Swedenborgian scholar could.

Carla Wills-Brandon, Ph.D., who has investigated deathbed vision experiences for 15 years and collected over 2,000 accounts, discovered that experiencers have similar deathbed visions and that the experience itself crosses all cultural, sexual, religious and social boundaries. She shared numerous deathbed vision encounters, noted that not only the dying but their care givers have deathbed visions which can be experienced days, weeks, and even months before actual physical death occurs.

M. Damaris J. Drewry, Ph.D., noted that after-death communications which are common, natural and non-pathological, help facilitate the grieving process. Her research with those who had had such communications showed that as a result of their after-death communications, participants experienced long-term, liberating, transformational changes

in awareness of self, relationship with the deceased, and new understanding of the meaning of life, death, and the divine.

Frank E. White, Ph.D., conducted a research project with 12 licensed psychotherapists to obtain a deep and robust description of the phenomenon of psychospiritual integration. Analysis of the data obtained in this study conceptualized psychospiritual integration as having four core themes: 1) spiritual events that become integrated into one's life and mental-egoic structures evolve towards the transegoic and universal; 2) the teleological basis on which psychospiritual integration is founded is that spirituality is the basis of everything; 3) engagement with the sacred including acts of receptivity to that which is Greater than the Self, surrender, and openness; and 4) mystery and tolerance for the unknown, which is the motivation and perpetuation of psychospiritual integration.

Ravindra Kumar, Ph.D., summarized his own experiences with cosmic light and sound, the experience of death, seeing his own double, out-of-body visits to higher realms and talking to the inhabitants there, and visits to self-illuminated spiritual planets that are full of bliss. He found that one's spiritual experiences are in accordance with the metal makeup of the person.

Montague Keen, winner of the 2003 Robert H. Ashby Memorial Award competition for the best paper on "A Comparison of Psychic and Religious Sources on Life After Death" presented this winning paper, stating that religious conviction in post mortem survival is based essentially on faith while belief founded on psychic experience is derived essentially from evidence. For Christians, admission of this evidence poses dogmatic and philosophical problems that are very difficult to reconcile since the most persuasive documentation and testimony supporting some form of religious belief clashes with the most fundamental of Christian tenets. Mr. Keen also examined some earlier and very recent evidential scientific work that strongly supports the hypothesis of survival and thereby underpins an essentially religious philosophy.

In a conference concluding panel discussion, six of the main presenters spoke on subjects such as experiences in meditation, calling on spiritual beings for help, mind reading, premonitions, answers to prayer, seeing everything as frequencies and vibrations, paradigm shifts, inhibitions of the ruling belief system grounded in philosophical materialism, and criteria for accepting evidence of personal religious and psychical experiences and the skeptic-believer continuum.

All presentations, together with a following question and answer period, were recorded on audio cassette tapes that are available for sale. A Cassette Order Form is available on the final page of this *Proceedings*.

THE ACADEMY OF RELIGION AND PSYCHICAL RESEARCH
ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2003 PROCEEDINGS

THE VARIETIES OF MY PSYCHIC AND RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

Dr. John F. Miller, III

Drawing on the insights of William James, whose book, The Varieties of Religious Experience was published a hundred and one years ago, the author shares his conversion experiences, his experiences with mind's power, meditative experiences and channelling, as well as experiences of ecstasy and insight.

I. William James (1842-1910)

The Academy's conference theme this year honors the pioneering work of William James, on the hundredth and first anniversary of the publication of his ground-breaking book, The Varieties of Religious Experience, published in 1902.

Early in his life, William showed an interest in both painting and science; and this, along with his later training in medicine and knowledge of evolution, led him to appreciate the diversity and concreteness of the world. Attention to detail and specific empirical facts is evident in the courses which he taught at Harvard: anatomy and physiology in 1873, psychology in 1875, and finally philosophy in 1879.

Classical empiricism holds that there can be nothing in the mind which was not first in the senses. James expanded empiricism to include whatever occurs within consciousness, not merely what comes through sense experience. Hence the study of religious experience was, for him, legitimate.

In James' philosophy known as "pragmatism," the subjective cannot be avoided. In his earlier Principles of Psychology (1890), James described "a world of pure experience." It was only natural that a little more than a decade later he would narrow that description to religious experience.

As a scientist, James treated mental states as arising from physical antecedents; but James cautioned against reducing mental states to physical ones. The physical and the mental realms are "irreducible dualisms" or "dualities." Therefore, it makes sense to describe mental states in their unique peculiarity and variety: hence, James' interest in the varieties of religious experience. Since mental states are subjective, the method of description must necessarily be introspection. Like sense perception, this inner perception is subject to error; and as with objective observation, what is true is finally determined by what is agreed upon by our experience: later experiences may correct earlier ones, until

a coherent conceptual framework, what James called a "harmony of a consistent system," is eventually attained.

In James' philosophy, our mental life is purposive in that it involves overcoming the difficulties, challenges, or obstacles which life presents. Our thoughts change, as they encounter new ideas and situations, challenges and problems; hence our ideas are selective according to our interests. Arising in response to our external and internal environment, our thoughts are determined in part by those conditions, but equally by our current interests.

Since they arise in the world, religious feelings and experiences, must, in some sense, reflect that world. Moreover, from an evolutionary standpoint, these experiences must serve a function that is in some way beneficial. According to Darwinism as James understood it, whatever exists serves, or served, a function, or purpose, in furthering evolution. It makes sense to ask, then, not only the origins but the purpose of religious experience. It is to this task that the 1901-1902 Gifford lectures which became James' book on the varieties of religious experience turned.

Religious experience is subjective, arising from one's consciousness or subconsciousness. The experiences naturally have antecedents, but explaining what those antecedents are in no way explains them: experiences cannot be reduced to their antecedents. Nor does it diminish the experience, because for James the experiences have their worth and significance by their function in the life of the one who had the experience. The verification of religious belief must come in the difference which it makes in people's lives. If no difference, then the belief would be "meaningless."

James' conclusion is that there is "more" to reality than empirical science admits and that experience is richer than empirical science would allow for. There is a "higher part of the universe," James says in Pragmatism; and although not known through the senses, it can be hypothesized because of the difference which it makes in people's lives. James' naturalism and empiricism, then, are more inclusive than the materialism and empiricism of contemporary science.

II. A Prolegomena

Before I describe the varieties of my psychic and religious experiences, a word of caution. Just what is a description? Since Immanuel Kant in the Nineteenth Century, philosophers have become aware that the human mind brings to experience its categories and concepts in accordance with which it interprets experience. No "pure" experience is possible, apart from that very human consciousness which is doing the experiencing. As Wittgenstein would later say, there is no seeing except as "seeing as." In other words, all experience is interpreted: description is inextricably conjoined with conceptualization. Descriptions do not merely mirror the world; they select for attention this or that aspect, according to our wants or desires, our purposes and interests. Assumptions are embedded in the very descriptions

which we give of our experience. I myself argued this same point in a series of articles years ago. (Miller, 1969, 1971, 19731, 1973b, 1975, 1978)

So it is important, for James, that one make one's assumptions clear from the start. One cannot legitimately approach experience with a priori assumptions which have been chosen apart from experience. One may, however, use those which were themselves suggested by experience, as science does; but those assumptions are necessarily tentative and subject to alteration. As a psychical researcher aware of the role of mind in determining how one describes experience, one must never let one's theoretical and abstract commitments or beliefs distort the description of one's experiences.

James' empiricism and ours must be unrestricted and "radical." In his Essays in Radical Empiricism, James wrote: "To be radical, an empiricism must neither admit into its constructions any element that is not directly experienced, nor exclude ... any element that is directly experienced" (quoted in Harman, 1994, 142).

So now as I turn to a description of the variety of my own psychic and religious experiences, let us recall how James, described the "religious":

It is as if there were in the human consciousness a sense of reality, a feeling of objective presence, a perception of what we may call 'something there,' more deep and more general than any of the special and particular 'senses' by which the current psychology supposes existent realities to be originally revealed. . . . These feelings of reality . . . are as convincing to those who have them as any direct sensible experience can be, and they are, as a rule, much more convincing than results established by mere logic ever are. (1960, 71-72)

You and I have had such experiences. We know that "the probability is that you cannot help regarding them as genuine perceptions of truth, as revelations of a kind of reality which no adverse argument, however unanswerable by you in words, can expel from your belief" (James, 1960, 72). Let me now describe my psychic and religious experiences.

III. Conversions

"To be converted," James says in his chapter on the subject, is to undergo a "process, gradual or sudden, by which a self hitherto divided, and consciously wrong inferior and unhappy, becomes united and consciously right superior and happy, in consequence of its firmer hold upon religious realities." (1960, 157) The consequences of conversion are a state of peace and harmony, the conviction that one has now attained truth, a world which now seems different, and a general feeling of happiness (1960, 198-203) James says that sudden conversion is a kind of "self-surrender" (1960, 170) Both of my conversions were of this type.

I was raised in the Episcopal faith and as a child was very religious. I prayed, although I sometimes wondered whether there was Anyone who heard. I would picture myself standing outside a dark forest, calling into it as in prayer, wondering whether the forest was empty. But I carried the candles in the procession at church, then the crucifix as I got older, and finally I served as a acolyte on the altar during communion even through my first year in college. But I always had my doubts, which tore me into what James would call a "divided self."

The source of my divided religious and agnostic nature was theodicy, the so-called problem of evil. My mother was a school teacher, and she would come home with stories of her students, children approximately my age, who didn't have lunch money, or rubber shoes when it rained, or goulashes when it snowed. When Mom taught, she would hire two black ladies, a mother and daughter, to do the ironing and cleaning respectively. We would drive over to the other side of town, literally across the railroad tracks, to their run-down house on a dirt street, to pick them up. Early in my life, from the fourth grade on, I was aware that others did not have the privileges I enjoyed. That bothered me, for it seemed unfair.

A lady at church got leukemia, and we would visit her on Sundays. Her son was about my age. I watched his mother go from 135 pounds to a mere 85 pounds of skin and bones, so skinny that there seemed hardly any flesh into which to put the needle to relieve, temporarily, her pain. Why did she have the disease? Why did she have to suffer? She seemed like a good Christian woman to me. How was this fair? And if it wasn't fair, how could there be a God? Mustn't God at least be just and fair?

These questions bothered me, tore my mind in two: I wanted to believe, and I did; but I doubted. Then one October night in 1958, my sophomore year of college, a dark night of the soul descended upon me. I had to know! I went to my priest's home. He was not home. I sat on his steps and waited for his return. When he came, I asked him how he resolved the problem of evil. I had written my freshman term paper on that subject, for which I had read maybe as many as parts of forty books. I concluded my paper that I could find no answer, but there must be an answer, and one could somehow get by through the grace of Christ. But that answer vexed me during the summer; so when I returned to college, the night of crisis was not long coming.

The priest gave me the standard answers, but I had already thought through and found them lacking. Finally, I turned to him and asked, "Father, what satisfies you?" I remember that he shook his head and admitted, "I have no answer." That night, on my way back to the dorm, I felt that I had to make a decision. Either I had to hold on to my childhood faith and give up my reason, or I had to retain my intellectual integrity and give up the religion of my youth. For me there was no choice. That night, without dramatic crisis or fanfare, I gave up the religion of my childhood. And I have never returned.

As James describes it, my conversion from Christianity to atheism, or at least agnosticism, led me to an inward state of peace and harmony. No longer was I a divided soul: I perceived what I took to be "truth" as I never had before; the objective world looked different for me from that time on. The healing of the divided self brought happiness in its wake. These are characteristics of conversion which James notes (1960, 198-203).

My second conversion was a sudden self-surrendering as well. Long an agnostic, if not an atheist, I continued to study religion and to consider its problems academically. I earned my M.A. and Ph.D. in philosophy, taught at Radford College, University of South Florida, and Radford College, before accepting a teaching job in Denton at North Texas State University. I was thirty-two years old. Two years later, I would attend a lecture which would change my life. I cannot find the notes which I took on that lecture; but the subject was the metaphysical world view of bodies, planes, reincarnation and karma.

As I listened to Terriji speak, I could "see" with my mind's eye how all the philosophers and writers of literature whom I had studied fit into a coherent whole. In philosophy, one studies the various philosophers from the pre-Socratics to through contemporary philosophers. Plato and Aristotle are contrasted for their views on the Forms, Augustine and Aquinas for their synthesizing Christianity with Platonism and Aristotelianism respectively, the rationalists with the empiricists, Spinoza for holding that there is only one substance in contrast with Descartes' two-substance dualism, the empiricists Locke and Hume with the idealists like Hegel and Berkeley, and finally contemporary philosophy with its analytic philosophy, phenomenology, existentialism, and post-modernism. No one in my entire education--and this is still true for students of philosophy today--put all these great thinkers--and they were great thinkers--together in a way that what they said cohered into a single whole, despite the fact that all of them claimed to be describing reality.

Philosophy has long been known for discussing, without making any progress, the same problems which vexed Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle over twenty-three centuries ago! Or without attaining any agreement! But as I listened to this lecture, all of the philosophical pieces seemed to fit into the Grand Puzzle of Existence, if I may be so bold as to use such a phrase. My conversion to the metaphysical world view was virtually instantaneous: the coherence of a world view which fit the great philosophical and literary minds into a single whole, which honored each's insight and vision of truth, seemed to me certainly true! Or so the conviction broke into my consciousness.

IV. The Power of the Mind

It took but a month after my intellectual conversion to the new world view before I desired, experientially, to know its truths. Intellectual coherence was indeed convincing, but experience could confirm what seemed theoretically sound.

I began to practice meditation; but before I share with you some of those experiences, let me first say a word about the power of the mind.

"Energy follows thought" was how the ancient Hermetic tradition put it. "Ask, and it shall be given you," Jesus had promised (Mat. 7:7, 7:11, 21:22; Luke 11:9-13). "Our thoughts are prayers, and we are always praying," says my aunt, Rev. Amalie Frank, a Unity minister. It was this power of asking in thought that was my first psychic experiment.

I began with the simple: asking for a parking place in front of the store to which I was going. The first time I tried it, I sent out the thought for a place right in front of the Final Exam, a private club which I helped to start in Denton, Texas. As I approached the club, I saw that there were no parking places. Okay, I said to myself, let me drive around the block. And on my return, there was a place right in front of the club.

Faith. Trust. If one does not believe, if one does not have the faith, if one cannot trust that what one asks for will be given to one, the power of the mind is made impotent. Once experience provides evidence of the power of thought, one's mental power becomes all the more increased, for power follows faith, trust, and belief. As William James noted, our faith or trust that certain experiences are possible may be a necessary condition for the possibility of certain kinds of knowledge which are revelatory of reality. In his essay, "The Will to Believe," James wrote:

There are, then, cases where a fact cannot come at all unless a preliminary faith exists in its coming. And where faith in a fact can help create the fact, that would be an insane logic which should say that faith running ahead of scientific evidence is the 'lowest kind of immorality' into which thinking can fall. (1956, 25)

Sometimes I would pull into a parking lot of a mall, and as I approached the store to which I was going, I would see the backup lights of the car right in front of the store. I would always say, sometimes aloud, "thank you," as the car pulled out and provided a space for me. Once parking places were easy, I began sending the thought out for other things. I had a number of rental properties in Denton, and tenants were always asking for a desk, sofa, and so on. Always when I sent out the thought and then went to a garage sale or a flea market, I would always find exactly what I needed.

I used to wear white shoes in the hot Texas summers. I had written my mom that I wanted a pair of white loafers, and in her next letter she sent me a check for \$30 to buy a pair. But I sent out the thought that I wanted such shoes; and the next Saturday I was driving down Carroll Blvd. when my eyes spotted a garage sign. I turned and soon was at the end of a driveway where the garage sale was in the back yard. As I walked down the driveway, I saw many pairs of shoes. They were exactly my size. Of course, many pairs were white. just

"How much for the shoes?" I asked. "Oh, \$5 a pair," the lady said. "How much for all of them?" I asked. "Oh, what about \$35," said the lady. "How about \$30?" I asked. And with the \$30 which Mom sent me to buy one pair of shoes, I bought at least fifteen pairs. I took a polaroid picture of the shoes, lined up against the wall in my bedroom, and sent it to Mom who, naturally, was surprised at what I was able to buy with her \$30 check.

Two of the most interesting cases of the power of the mind to lead one to what one has asked for occurred many years ago. I had remodelled an apartment and had bought a gold couch to go with the gold draperies and olive green rug. But when the new tenants moved in, they had their own couch. So I put the gold couch in my place, and color coordinated around it. Later when the tenants moved out, I moved the couch back into the apartment. But that left me without a gold couch. "I need a gold couch," I said to the Universe, as I sent out the thought. A weekend or so later, when I was leaving the home of a girl friend in Dallas, I again sent out the thought: I need a gold couch. Immediately as I turned onto Midway Road, I heard in my mind, as clearly as though the words were spoken aloud, "Walnut Hill." Walnut Hill was the next major intersection; and as I approached it, I said aloud, "Walnut Hill and what?" Immediately there came into my mind, as clear as though spoken aloud, "Webbs Chapel." Webbs Chapel was two major lights west; and as I approached the intersection, there was a garage sale sign. I parked, walked down the driveway, and there was a Duncan Fife antique gold couch. I must confess that this was the only time I was actually given the explicit location of what I wanted!

Another experience of the power of the mind concerned a house whose number I liked. (Numerologists are funny that way!) I used to walk past this house daily on my way to and from the university, and regularly I'd send out the thought, "I'd like to buy this house." As I had just bought a house on the next street, I was in no hurry to make the purchase. A year or two later, I was invited to a retirement party for the gentleman who owned the house. While he was seated on the sofa and I on a chair across a coffee table from him, he made the decision to sell his home and move to south Texas. I leaned across the coffee table and said, "Jim, sell the house to me." And so he did. I was within five feet of him when he decided to sell the house which I wanted to buy!

The power of our minds can be illustrated by many more examples. For Conscious Development, the metaphysical group I studied with in Dallas, healing was one of its interests. I learned to draw energy into my hands for healing headaches, toothaches, neck and back pain, and similar discomforts. The first time I tried to remove a headache, I was skeptical. But after doing several, and then many, I became convinced of the power of thought to heal.

In 1966, I moved from the northeast to Tampa to teach philosophy at the University of South Florida. I had long had allergies and asthma, for which I had taken shots every two weeks since I was a boy. The only things, besides foods,

that I wasn't allergic to were water lilies! But when I moved to Florida, I made the conscious, deliberate decision no longer to have allergies or asthma. And ever since that decision, some 37 years ago, I have never had an allergy or asthmatic attack!

We have the power to give up, at least to some degree, our afflictions and impediments. We hold them, perhaps, because of their value to our ego. In the Fall of 1970 I had just taken a position at North Texas State University. I was assigned an early morning class in a subject that I had not taught before. Naturally I got to my office early to prepare for the 8:00 o'clock class. My office was across from the classroom, and I had left my office door open. Fifteen minutes before class, into my office walked a woman and sat down in the chair by the door. As I turned toward her, I heard these words in my mind, as clearly and distinctly as though they were said aloud: "This is the girl God has sent you to love." Strange words, indeed, for someone who was an atheist and who knew nothing about reincarnation! But it was "love at first sight," a recognition that constituted a later remembering of lives together in the past.

Llynette was a "wounded" spirit, so deeply wounded and hurt, in fact, that she was, in my judgment, evil. Her first husband had committed suicide, her second became homosexual, and her third husband abandoned her and her young daughter on the Fourth of July. As he once told me, "If you are looking at a clock, and ask Llynette what time it is, she would lie." Lying was one of the many sociopathic ways she negotiated the world. With men she used sex manipulatively: she withheld it, except when she wanted something. Sex was her tool of power, control, and humiliation. I fell victim to that tool.

A colleague suggested that I take Llynette to New York City, not only to see the art museums, since Llynette was an artist, but to get to know her and begin a relationship with her. Reluctantly, I agreed; and Llynette and I flew first to "The Big Apple." We stayed in my voice teacher's apartment. Llynette would not sleep with me. "There're lots of whores out there," she said, "Go find one of them."

It was not the withholding of sex, but the deep sense of rejection, that wounded my ego and seemingly my very soul. I did not stop loving her, or seeing her from time to time, between marriages, when she would return to Denton. But the pain of rejection was overwhelming, and I was obsessed with her. She was aloof and uncompromising. Then I was offered a seminar in the Canary Islands, and Llynette drove me to the airport. During the week I was on the island, at night I would call her in my mind, pour out my pain and longing for her, tell her that we simply must work out our relationship. When she picked me up at the airport, there was something different. We went to my house and, for the first time in years, made love. At the moment of climax, I felt as though a steel plate, eight inches thick and running the full length of my body, lifted away. I was free at last! But at the same instant I realized that I could have chosen to release that plate of the pain and rejection any time! I had held it, as

a martyr's cross, so that I could feel that she owed me! That was an incredible insight which I shall never forget.

Those who know me know that I have always stammered. At times it is painful to listen to me, and at other times I manage to communicate adequately. The irony is, of course, that I have made my living speaking! When I graduated from Gettysburg College and applied to take a master's degree at Johns Hopkins, the chairman of the Philosophy Department, Dr. Maurice Mandelbaum, said to me, "Why do you want to pursue philosophy? You can't teach with your stammering." So I went to the University of Maryland and earned my M.A. When I finished my course work for the doctorate at N.Y.U., I went to the chairman, Dr. Sidney Hook, and asked whether he could help me find a job. "Oh, no," he had replied, "not with your speech impediment. Stay around another year, do some work in logic, and maybe" A week later my dissertation advisor Dr. Kai Nielsen called and told me that Queens College needed someone to teach Philosophy of Religion and Introduction to Philosophy that summer. Could I do it? Of course, I replied; and within a few days, I was hired to teach philosophy. And for the next thirty-five years, I would teach philosophy in colleges and universities throughout the country.

But despite my speaking for a living, I continued to stammer. Two years ago in May, at a Wesak festival in honor of the birthday of the Buddha, I attended a "washing the baby Buddha" ceremony at the Unitarian Church of Clearwater. As I approached the statue and poured water over the figure, I prayed that the Buddha I would accept my stammering as a gift and would take it from me. For the next six weeks I did not stammer! Then the old habit, and the old fears, came back. This year I did the same thing: I offered my stammering to the Buddha. And again, for several months I was free from my impediment. Each day I ask in prayer that the energies which constitute the habit of my stammering be dissolved; and to a large extent, I have been speaking freely.

We have the power to receive what we ask for, to use our minds for healing of others, and to remove hindrances and impediments from our lives. I know this power of the mind through my own experience and, I bet, you do, too.

V. A Meditation Experience

A month after my intellectual conversion to the esoteric world view of bodies and planes, reincarnation and karma, I wanted experiential evidence that the conceptual system to which I had given intellectual assent was true. I began to meditate with the metaphysical group in Dallas. Through the method taught, I learned to sense the difference between the physical, astral, mental, and spiritual planes of consciousness and, to a limited extent, to have experiences on those planes.

My teaching changed dramatically that year. When I awakened in the morning, I would ask what I might share with my students that day; and ideas which I had not learned in this lifetime came pouring into my mind. In more disciplined

meditation, I was introduced to my "guides," whose names and descriptions were confirmed by my teacher before I told her what I had experienced.

In the summer of 1974 I attended Naropa Institute, a Tibetan center in Boulder, Colorado. Each afternoon I would meditate for an hour and a half to two hours. I was given a technique to blend with my master, the ancient preSocratic philosopher Pythagoras; but each time in meditation when I called him, there were four others present. I could not imagine them away. They stood in a semicircle, always in the same position, and I "recognized"--how I do not know--four of them: Pythagoras, Plato, Plotinus, and Orpheus. The fifth I did not know. All summer long I blended my energies with these masters; and upon returning to Dallas, I asked my teacher and her husband to dinner. I reminded her of the technique to blend with Pythagoras but that when I went into meditation.... "There were four others," she interrupted, and she named them: Orpheus, Plato, Plotinus, and Apollonius. It was Apollonius of Tyana whom I had not recognized. However, the North Texas State University library had a copy of his biography, which I read upon returning to Denton.

That Fall I was scheduled to teach a late afternoon seminar in Pythagoras, Plato, and Plotinus; but I added a lecture on Orpheus at the beginning of the course and one on Apollonius at the end. The last afternoon before class, I went into meditation, called the masters, and asked whether I could bring the class, in meditation, to meet them. They agreed; so I bought fruit and cheese and soft drinks, and after my lecture on Apollonius, I asked the class whether they would like to meet the philosophers whom we had studied. The class responded enthusiastically in favor.

But I was concerned. Two students, Marsha and Steve, had shown considerable hostility toward the ideas presented in the course. In fact, Steve had stopped coming to class entirely for several weeks until I sent notice to him either to come to class or to drop the course. He returned; but I was still concerned that his hostility and Marsha's would negatively impact the meditation. I asked them to wait in the faculty lounge until the meditation was over. They asked to stay. Reluctantly, I began the meditation, using light to raise the vibrations of the students' consciousness from the physical, through the astral and mental, to the spiritual level where the masters were waiting. Of course, I asked help from the masters. When we arrived in consciousness, I could "see" a Greek-style temple with white marble steps, in front of which was a beautiful pool of water. I asked the students to visualize, or imagine, the pool of water, step into the water and cleanse themselves, and then see the masters standing on the temple steps in front of them. I then instructed the students to greet the masters and to learn from their contact with them.

To close the meditation, we said goodbye to the masters, stood in a column of light, and lowered our vibrations. By now the last vestiges of light were dim on the horizon. I asked whether I should turn on the lights, and the immediate

response was, "No." So we sat in the semi-darkness and sacred silence for a number of minutes while I handed out the fruit, cheese, and drinks. Then, after some time, I said, "Well, it is a party," and with that I turned on the lights.

The next day there was a knock on my office door. It was "Mushroom" Steve. We had given him the nickname because he believed that any religious, mystical, or paranormal experience must be the result of having ingested mushrooms! "Dr. Miller," he said, "I have to talk with you." He then proceeded to tell me that, before I said to see the pool of water, he saw it and had entered it; before I said to see the masters on the temple's steps, he had seen them. "I went up to Pythagoras"--Steve had done his term paper on Pythagoras--"to congratulate him on his musical theory," Steve continued, "and the love that flowed from him was so incredible that tears flowed down my cheeks!" What an experience! What a profound and sacred experience for a skeptical disbeliever! Steve did not know how to integrate his experience into his world view, but he could not deny that it happened.

VI. Meditation and Reincarnation

My meditative experiences have also confirmed for me the truth of reincarnation. Remember Llynette? In meditation I have seen us skipping over the hills in what looked like an English countryside, perhaps in the last century. In another meditation, when I took the meditation class to the levels of the causal plane where memories of past lives are stored, I asked whether I had known a woman named Claudette, with whom I had a unique relationship. She would not tell me where she lived or give me her phone number; but from time to time she would show up at my door, wanting to be with me. Obsessive was my attraction to her. What was its origin?

In meditation I saw clearly--and I don't usually see clearly on the inner planes--a castle in which she was a domestic servant and I had a relative position of power. In those times, a superior could ask for, even demand, sexual favors from an inferior. I did, and she complied, willingly though reluctantly because it was demanded. What I realized was that in this life the roles were reversed: she had all the control, and I was the compliant servant. Something else came to consciousness during that meditation as well. In that life I had been an ombudsman for the serfs: it was my job to make sure that they were fed and housed, and treated well. In this life, I have done the same to the student "serfs" to whom I rented: I would take care of them, provide housing for them, and treat them very fairly--even to my own disadvantage.

The last meditation experience involving reincarnation occurred in 1989 in Dallas at the exhibition of Ramses II. Having been to Egypt the year before, I had no desire to see the relatively few items on display at the museum; but my colleagues, Joy and Marilyn, insisted. The last room was a large hall, at the end of which was the forty foot granite statue of Ramses II. Joy, Marilyn, and I sat on the marble bench at the end of the room and went into a meditation. I

was almost immediately transported back to the time of Ramses. I was a high priest, and I was making my vow to the pharaoh to teach the mystery teaching to the initiates of the temple. But as I heard myself taking the oath of commitment to Ramses, I heard myself make the identical vow, word for word, in this life. My consciousness was in both the past and the present.

VII. Channelling: Ecstasy and Insight

Let me share, briefly, another meditative experience with Pythagoras. I had come across a saying, attributed to the Samian sage, that "time is the soul of the world." What does that enigmatic saying mean? I had thought about it for months, maybe even a year or more, but no answer came to me. In 1979 the New Mexico & West Texas Philosophical Society was going to hold its conference in Chihuahua, Mexico. I hadn't been there and thought that it might be an interesting place to visit. Why not write a paper for the conference? Why not on the subject of "Time as the Soul of the World"? The only problem: I hadn't a clue as to what it meant!

But as the deadline for the paper approached, one night I went into meditation, raised my consciousness to the spiritual level, and called Pythagoras. What, I asked, does "time as the soul of the world" mean? Immediately my mind was filled with a gestalt of meaning, whole paragraphs coming at once. I came back down from meditation, wrote as rapidly as I could, ascended back to the soul plane, received more ideas, and back down to write them down as quickly as I could. The result: an article entitled "Time as the Soul of the World: A Meditation on the Pythagorean Conception of Time." (Miller, 1979) So excellent was the paper that it was accepted almost immediately for publication in Apeiron, a prestigious journal of ancient philosophy.

Another significant experience of "channelling" occurred one evening as I prepared to write an essay on Sophocles' "Oedipus Rex" for a 1981 conference in ancient literature at the University of Florida. For a long time I had reflected and meditated on this superb drama and had even written an essay on it. But this evening, as I sat down to put words to paper, I said to myself, "Wouldn't it be neat to present my ideas in dramatic form!"

No sooner had I uttered the words, when it began to come. Words flowed into my mind as clearly as though they were being dictated out loud. It was 11 o'clock when I had started; so at midnight, I stopped and said, "It's midnight." The words kept flowing. At 1 A.M. I said, "It's 1 A.M.," but the channelling did not stop. About 1:30 in the morning, the channelling was completed. The whole experience had been both ecstatic and noetic: both filled with a joyous and blissful consciousness, but with knowledge and comprehension as well. The next day when I went to retype it, I discovered that it was eight and a half pages, double-spaced and double-columned of iambic pentameter! It was a monologue, and I was Oedipus. The entire drama was replayed, with spiritual interpretation, through the words of a single speaker: Oedipus. I have

performed that drama on a number of occasions, and each time I can feel a hint of the ecstasy which I experienced when I channelled the monologue.

VIII. Other Experiences of Ecstasy and Insight

My first experience of ecstasy occurred during the late Sixties, when I was teaching at the University of South Florida. I was invited to a University of Tampa piano recital given by Leslie Jones, who began his program with Beethoven's Sonata in F Minor, Op. 57, the "Appassionata." During that performance my consciousness was lifted to the dizzying heights of ecstasy; and not ever having experienced such bliss before, I was aware only of the need to be alone. At intermission, I went and stood alone in the gardens.

It would be years later that I was given my second taste of the ecstasy which is the nature of the soul. In Yoga the soul is called the anandamaya kosha, the body through which bliss, joy, peace, love, and ecstasy are experienced. I was attending a student performance of "The Man of LaMancha" at North Texas State University. I had seen the musical many times, for my voice teacher, Norman Kelley, had performed the role of Sancho Panza or the priest on many occasions. I had even seen a performance of the play in Amsterdam, in Dutch. But this evening was different!

As I watched the play, it dawned on me that Don Quixote was a symbol of the Christ; and as that realization and its import became more clear to my consciousness, I was raised to the soul level and experienced, for more than three hours, a state of utter ecstasy. I had taken a girl friend to the play; but the pleasure of sex with her paled in comparison to the ecstasy of bliss. I excused myself, and lay on my bed for the hours that the ecstasy remained. (Miller, 1993b)

Another experience of ecstasy and insight was occasioned by a rug! A neighbor was remodelling his house, and he put all the scraps of sheetrock and lumber and other debris out on the sidewalk. There was also a large rug. But when the sanitation department employees picked up the piles of stuff, they left the rug, which was apparently too large or heavy for them to move. So the rug lay there for days, then weeks, getting more and more moldy and smelly. Dogs marked it with their scent, vermin made their home in its folds; and I had to walk over or around that rug daily on my way to school. As the days went on, and then weeks, I became agitated, then angry, and began to think unkind thoughts about my neighbor. What should I do? Should I call the City? I soon realized that I was wishing my neighbor harm!

That was not something that I wanted to do. How did thoughts of harm arise? From my judgment that the rug ought not be there on the sidewalk. So one morning I decided to walk to school without judging. I don't know about you, but I found the task daunting and difficult! A fraternity house was at the corner of the next block, and evidence of its existence was obvious along the street: beer can and cups lined the gutters, along with wrappings from Jack in the Box,

just two blocks further up the street. The fraternity house sat on the east edge of campus, so students would peel around the corner as they sped down Hickory Street where I lived.

But I had decided not to judge! When I saw the crushed beer cans and litter in the gutter, I merely marveled at the patterns which they made. When I heard the screeching of tires, I merely gave thanks that I could hear. Somehow, with great concentration and effort I managed to walk the four blocks to campus without judging. As I stepped on the dirt path leading to the building where my office was located, I was suddenly lifted into an ecstatic state of consciousness. And I heard these words, as clearly as if the heavens had opened and God Himself had spoken them:

"God veils Himself in many forms of Love."

It was as though everything which I saw or heard was the expression of Divine Love. Everything, properly seen through a consciousness of non-judgment, is the concrete expression of Love. (Miller, 1993a)

Thomas Merton must have had a similar experience about which he wrote:

There is in all things an inexhaustible sweetness and purity, a silence that is a fountain of action and joy. It rises up in wordless gentleness and flows out to me from unseen roots of all created being.

IX. Conclusion

I could go on and on. But you will be thankful if I stop, and so I shall. But what more profitable insight to leave you with than this, that God veils Himself in many forms of Love: that wherever we look, if we see correctly, we see the Divine immanent. In the Bhagavad Gita (6:29) Krishna says to Arguna: "A true yogi observes Me in all beings, and also sees every being in Me. Indeed, the self-realized man sees Me everywhere."

For William James, religious experience is verified only through its moral effects in the life of those who have the experience. My whole life has been a search for truth. For the last fifteen or twenty years, it has been also a quest to express and manifest love. What more moral life could one lead than a life of love? The passage which I most often remember from the New Testament--and this was Mother Teresa of Calcutta's, too-- are the words of Jesus: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Mat. 25:40). What a world it would be if we could see with "the eyes of Christ," if we could see the Divine in everyone and everywhere, and act accordingly in love! (Miller, 1993b)

My old mantrum, formulated years ago and used even today, is this:

The Power of the Divine resides within me.
The Love of the Divine expresses through me.
The Wisdom of the Divine manifests in and through
my life.

But since the first of this year, as I have realized that this mantrum assumes a separation between me and the Divine, I have begun a new meditation in which I now affirm that I am one with the Ground of Being, that my love flows from the Fountain of Love, my wisdom from the Source of all wisdom, my power from the Origin of all power. God is the Life which I lead, God is the Love which is my love, God is the Wisdom which is my wisdom, God is the Power which is my power. There is one Presence, one Power, one Life, one Fountain of Love and Source of Wisdom, and I am one with That.

Knowledge and Love, and even Joy, are high states of consciousness. But higher yet is Peace, and it is this toward which I am deliberately striving. Maybe some time, in years to come, I shall have the opportunity to share with you my experiences which have been occasioned by my experiments with Peace.

X. Prologue

In his famous essay, "The Will to Believe," William James says that sometimes we simply must choose to act on beliefs whose truth cannot be known purely by reason alone. Indeed, not to choose is itself a choice. You and I must make such a choice. Physical science cannot yet determine the veracity of our psychic and religious experiences. Yet, as I noted before, sometimes one's commitment and faith constitute the very condition for having the experience which is revelatory of the nature of reality. I agree with William James that "a rule of thinking which would absolutely prevent me from acknowledging certain kinds of truth if those kinds of truth were really there, would be an irrational rule."

Therefore, at this Academy conference, on this the hundredth and first anniversary of William James' pioneering work, The Varieties of Religious Experience, I suggest that we make the commitment to know the truth, to plumb the depths of our consciousness to discover within it experiences which will guide us toward the truth of the nature of reality. As I have argued elsewhere (Miller, 1992), it is legitimate to do so and to act on the basis of one's psychic and religious experiences.

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OPEN FORUM WITH THE AUDIENCE SHARING THEIR RELIGIOUS AND
PSYCHICAL EXPERIENCES

Abstract: In this open forum, members of the audience share their religious and psychical experiences, including distant intercessory prayer, lucid dreaming, electronic communication from a deceased friend, the movement and influence of a doll upon a medium, a woman attending her own funeral, healings from those in spirit, remote viewing, synchronicity, and a requested sign given by a dying woman.

Ruth Mattson Taylor: Those of you who attended the 2002 Annual Conference on Mediumship, and had the privilege of having a sitting with Muriel Williams, as I did, will attest to the wonderful, psychic talents of this beautiful soul. Muriel, who was clairvoyant, clairaudient and clairsentient, was born on October 17, 1926 and died on January 22nd of this year. I want to share the story of her illness and death with you, and let this sharing be a memorial tribute to her.

Muriel was not feeling well when she attended the conference last year, but graciously gave of her time and talent to those attending the conference who sought her help. When she returned to her doctors in Canada, she was diagnosed with advanced liver and colon cancer. Those of us who knew and loved Muriel were devastated by this news.

Since I have a regular Sunday afternoon healing circle at my home in South Portland, Maine, I contacted friends of Muriel's around the country and abroad and asked them to link in with the group at my home to add their energy to ours in sending healing energy to Muriel. All of us linked in together at precisely 4:00-5:00 P.M. E.S.T. Muriel, her husband, Dr. Bill Williams, and their close companion Tricia Cochran, who also has psychic vision, connected with us at precisely that time from their home in Toronto, Canada.

This turned out to be not only a wonderful healing and uplifting experience for Muriel, Bill and Tricia, but also somewhat of an unplanned "scientific experiment" on the validity of distant healing. Time is limited this evening, so I can only share with you the results of a couple of our sessions.

At our first healing session, I had asked the group at my home to concentrate on a large canopy of God's white light up over the whole room and a rotating prism of all the spectral colors in the center of that canopy, requesting that the specific healing colors which Muriel needed be sent to her. I had not told Tricia Cochran about the visualization method we were using. Tricia wrote down the details of what they experienced in Muriel's bedroom during the healing session and faxed me the following account:

"In preparation for the healing work, Muriel lay on the bed, Bill sat by the bed holding Mu's hand and I sat at the top of the bed with my hands on her head ready to receive the flow of healing energy.

As the time to begin approached, we said a short prayer to open ourselves to the divine universe. At the appointed time to begin, I felt a surge of energy enter my head and travel down into my hands. At the same moment an intense, vibrant indigo/purple light filled my third eye vision. As the flow of energy continued, the color changed to red/orange and

advanced through the spectrum associated with the chakra energy centers. My hands throughout the session were as though bonded to Muriel's head. As the time for closure drew near, the colors, which had manifested, all merged into one as in an amorphous field. The energy was so strong that we remained in position for at least 10 minutes after to allow for completion.

Muriel experienced a profound sense of peace during the healing process. At the commencement of the healing she was in some pain in the area of the liver. During the healing the pain diminished and she remained pain free for the rest of the day without having to take painkillers every few hours. The wonderful atmosphere remained in the bedroom throughout the day.

As for myself, I was completely reenergized, my thinking was clearer, I was uplifted and suddenly realized that my own energy level had been dropping and that I had become mentally overburdened. Your energy work cleared my field and set me back on track and made me aware of the difference."

During our second healing meditation for Muriel, I remember Jesus' admonition, "Whatsoever you ask in my name, it shall be given," and I silently called on his assistance in helping us channel the energy. I began to have a vision of his figure moving among the sick and healing them. After our meditation I shared this experience with my group. Later, when Tricia and I were discussing the session on the phone, and she was telling me about the different colors that were manifested that day, I told her about seeing the figure of Jesus during our meditation. Tricia was glad that I mentioned this because she had experienced seeing a spiritual presence in Muriel's room during the healing. She had told Bill and Muriel that there was a very powerful spiritual figure who had come. Tricia thought it might be Jesus and my account gave credence to that feeling.

These are only two accounts from the numerous healing sessions we had over the three months before Muriel made her transition to the spiritual planes. Through each healing session we continued to find experiential confirmation of the fact that our energies are indeed connected even when we are separated by great distances.

In spite of our concerted efforts, the healing for Muriel was not to be physical, but rather a preparation for her transition to the spiritual realms. I had a communication from her on February 23rd, just over a month after her passing and a brief portion of what she said follows:

"My dear Ruth, I want to thank you so much for all your dear efforts on my behalf when I was making my struggle in the physical body. Your concern and help were such a steadying upliftment to me. The energy of all the dear people who prayed for me was like a healing balm..., I really had a beautiful passing. It was like just stepping into another room."

Those of us who know and loved her will always remember Muriel with deep gratitude for so graciously sharing her talents to enrich our lives. We bless you, Muriel, as you continue your good work in the realms beyond.

A spectro-chemist, Ruth Mattson Taylor earned her A.B. degree in psychology and chemistry at Augustana College and her Master of Science degree at Northwestern University. She is an academic member and currently on the Board of Trustees of the Academy of Religion and Psychical Research. She has been a research in after-death communication for over 30 years and is the editor/author of "*Witness from Beyond*" and "*Evidence from Beyond*".

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Lew Dreisbach: I live in Easton, Pennsylvania. The sharing that I would like to leave with you is the highly unusual situation that happened about three years ago in front of my fireplace and elsewhere. I was reading a magazine that evening getting toward bed time and the article that I was reading was on lucid dreaming. I'm sure all of you know what lucid dreaming is. It's not a clear dream, it is a dream in which you wake up and have the power to control it. Sounds impossible, doesn't it? I was reading this article on lucid dreaming and was fascinated by it. At the conclusion of the article it was bed time and I rolled up the magazine in front of the fireplace and in getting up hit my thigh with it and said, "By golly I wish I could have a lucid dream sometime." That evening I had my first lucid dream. For emphasis you could say, well if you haven't had one you could ask for one. I didn't use that logic but that's what happened.

That evening I found myself curled up in bed and you can picture a five foot eleven guy curled up in bed. I started dreaming and in the dream I was standing erect, feet slightly apart as I'm standing now, both hands on my hips. I was looking at a plain white wall in front of me. There was a valance up near the ceiling with a florescent tube behind it, white light. I started moving my head back and forth and triangulated the distance of the valance out from the wall. I said to myself, "I wonder how far the valance is out from the wall?" Oh, it's about eight inches, at which point I realized I was fully awake and at the same time dreaming. It's as though this whole thing was programmed. I remembered reading in one of Carlos Castaneda's first books that his teacher told him, "Carlos, you're learning to be a shaman and as such I suggest that you hold your hands in front of your vision to prove it to yourself." I've talked to people on lucid dreaming and asked, "How did you know you were dreaming lucidly?" They said, "I held my hands up." I said, "What did you see?" They replied, "I saw my hands." I go quiet and then talk about the weather because my dream wasn't like that.

In the dream I remembered the instructions "hold your hands up in front of your vision." My vision was very plain, very clean, white wall, white valance, about eight inches out from the wall, florescent tube behind it. The whole wall was awash in white light. I was moving back and forth and woke up in the dream and remembered the instruction. Slowly I brought up my hands, feet apart, standing erect and I saw my thumbs coming up and then brought them up in front of my eyes. I wasn't looking at my hands, I'm looking at the wall out there and I had the most astonishing event of my life. I hadn't read about it and I hadn't conceived of it at all, I was just following instructions. Under those circumstances I had x-ray vision. How in the world can we have x-ray vision? I started moving my hands and doing a little dance in front of my so-called vision. The vision of the hand let me describe this so it isn't too fakey; it was like the best x-ray photograph you've ever seen of the human hand. The ligature was there, the fine edge delineating the end of the skin, the bones you see in a regular x-ray photograph. It was astonishing and I thought, let's have a little fun and I started dancing the bones. It was so hilarious that I burst out laughing and, as a consequence, I woke up. The fact that in my case I requested it and I didn't know what I was doing. I wished I could have a lucid dream sometime. I understand that this is one of the processes.

I had a completely different lucid dream, which seemed kind of programmed. I found myself in front of the library in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. There's a giant tree outside. I love that tree because I've been there. I walked into the library, borrowed some books, went toward the front door and discovered the doors were locked. The woman at the desk said, "You can't get out that way, it's almost 9:00. You'll have to go

out the side door." I walked over to the side of the room, out the door and there's a labyrinth of evergreen boxwoods. I walked through the labyrinth of boxwoods and finally ended up on the street. I awakened and my dream was over.

John Rayner: A few months ago I was planning a visit to England and also I had in mind of visiting two friends in Germany. I hadn't been in contact, except for sending Christmas cards, for a long time. I thought I'd better give Werner a call, which I did. A young girl came to the phone who didn't speak much English. She sounded a bit upset and mentioned grandpapa. Then a woman came to the phone and it was Werner's daughter. She explained to me that Werner had died in 1995. I'd been sending Christmas cards and I'd been wondering why there was no reply.

I recognized when I went to Germany I was only going to see one of my friends and not two. Indeed, I was sad when I heard the news that Werner had passed away. That wasn't the end of the story. A few days later while sitting at home at my desk, I heard the doorbell ring. I went to the front door, no one was there and no parcel had been left either. I thought that was very strange and thought to myself that maybe Werner or somebody, I didn't know who, is leaving me a message. I'm sure we're all aware of that kind of event. About three years ago a friend of mine lost her husband and shortly after he'd passed away she heard the doorbell ring a number of times. When she went to the door nobody was there. A couple of days later while I was sitting quite close to the front door and the doorbell went again. I went to the door and the same thing, nobody there and no parcel left. I thought I wonder if this is Werner. A couple days later, I was sitting at my desk. Everything was quiet and I heard a little beep from my phone and answering machine. I looked up at the display and there I saw the words Werner Hurtle. It doesn't really matter how it was done. I do have a number of names and numbers in the machine and the last one in the list happens to be Werner Hurtle. Nevertheless, I was sitting there quietly; there was no incoming message, nothing because when it gets an incoming message you see the name displayed. That was not the situation and there was no incoming call. I checked the logs just to be sure. Somehow that machine was caused to beep and to display that name on the list. Shivers went down my spine and it was the most wonderful experience to think that Werner had gone to the trouble to give me that indication that he was alive and well in another dimension. It was particularly compelling because it comes into the category of electronic mediumship. I'm not quite sure what that covers, but perhaps this comes into that category. The marvelous part of this is that the communication did not depend on a human intermediary in the form of a medium but was a direct communication in an electronic form. That's my story and I'm happy to be able to share it with you.

Kelly Weaver: I'm a professional medium. It's what I do in a day to day life. What I'm going to tell you shouldn't surprise me, but it did. I'm in the process of writing a book and have a public relations person from British Columbia helping me. The lady had written me a suggestion list and asked for me to publicize what makes me different than other mediums, other ghost investigators, other psychics, because there are a lot of people out there like me. I thought about it. I belong to a writer's club and saw a book that I had ordered and it was writing for children that I had bought for my husband.

I contacted a mentor of mine who has a museum and is a big deal in the ghost field. He has written many books and been on television. I asked him if he has any books geared towards children because I knew growing up that I'd had psychic experiences and nobody back in the 1960's could tell me about them. When I saw auras, my mom got me glasses; when I had the imaginary friends, it just wasn't happening. This is my background.

My friend thought a children's book was a fabulous idea and suggested he write the back of the book for me and help get it published. My husband and I left for vacation

that day and stopped at a ratty old yard sale. First I must tell you that I don't like dolls. I never collected them and although I played with Barbie dolls, but that's about it and I'm not a doll person. At the yard sale there was a doll that had on a big, ugly dress, but a pretty face and a babushka, like a Russian dressed doll. Her hands were crossed over and she didn't have legs. I realized that she covered something but was too pretty to cover a blender or toilet paper. It wasn't the kind grandmas make with a poodle head. I debated with myself, but it was only a dollar. Something made me buy this doll. My husband wondered what I was buying a doll for and I just didn't know.

I got into the car and the doll said to me, "My name is Tess." Okay. I couldn't believe I was 42 and talking to a doll. My husband said, "You're never too old to talk to your animals and your dolls." We got to our destination and I decided that I was going to rewrite my book. I put this doll-thing in front of me. All of a sudden information started coming out and coming out. I changed the story and I made the little girl in my story Tess. The book is called, *You're Standing on My Imaginary Friend: Tess and the Spirit World*. Originally I was writing about all my experiences and I just wasn't flying with it.

Fast forward a couple weeks and my husband asked how my book was going. To prove to him I really do work during the day, I said, "Let me read a couple chapters to you." We were in the bedroom and was reading to him and he asked, "Where is that doll anyway?" I showed him she was on top of the television in the bedroom. That night I was wound up and couldn't sleep. I went into the sunroom with the dog and was up until 3:00 A.M. I went back into my bedroom and got myself all comfy. Who do you think was in bed waiting for me? Number one, it wasn't my husband. It was the doll and let me tell you I came wide awake seeing Tess in bed with me.

If you could see where this doll was, there is no way she could get to the bed, it was supernatural. The next day my husband came in to awaken me and asked me why I was sleeping with Tess! I said it wasn't my idea, she just kind of showed up. The following day a friend asked, "Where is she now?" I explained I had Tess on the table. Let me explain that I do feel energy before I purchase anything second hand and if I don't like the energy I certainly don't buy. Tess does have really nice energy.

I propped her up on the desk where I write and the book has just like been flowing out. It is weird and I found out that Tess is a Russian tea cozy. There is one part of the book that I had rewritten before I knew that the grandmother in the book is serving hot tea to somebody. I began to wonder if this was a coincidence, I'm not sure.

Tess is interesting and another psychic held her and got goose bumps all the way up her back and down. Tess is now coming to her in her own dreams. Other individuals have received information from Tess. That's my story about Tess.

Anne Herrington: I had the privilege of taking care of my mother for about eight months before she passed on. She had a wonderful sense of humor and made her own funeral arrangements. We were joking over the color of the casket and I told the funeral director that she was going to die in a few months. I said, "It's okay, she knows."

The funeral was in San Francisco on a February day, overcast and foggy and somewhat rainy. In front of the casket appeared a beautiful, beautiful oval light of about three feet in diameter and maybe a foot and a half to two feet wide. I nudged my aunt and pointed at it and she nodded. I looked up to see if there was any light coming from any other source or stained glass windows. There was none and no spotlights. I heard my mother say she wanted two things and a closed casket was one of them. I heard her say, "For once you did something right." I was a stubborn, only child.

The other thing she said was, well, "It's my funeral; I might as well pull up a chair and enjoy it." Afterwards I asked my aunt, "Did you notice the beautiful, beautiful golden light in front of the casket?" and she said, "Yes." I asked my aunt-in-law on the

other side, "Did you notice that beautiful golden light in front of the casket? She said, "No, it was purple." That's the end of my story. It was my mother and she came to her own funeral.

Richard Batzler: I'd like to give you three examples of healing that I believe came from the other side. Sometimes we feel that all the healing is done on this level. These examples to share with you are ones that I feel have come from the other side and are helpful. Many of you knew Olga Worrall. Every night she and her husband, great healers and psychics, in Baltimore, would sit at 9:00 P.M. every evening and pray for a number of people in general.

I had a physician in the church I was pasturing who wanted to go to Ghana as a medical missionary and wanted to get her insights, suggestions. We went to Olga's and she went into her quiet time meditation. During that time, a figure appeared and spoke in a very strange language. Olga did not understand it, but she could repeat the words. The physician, who had a Syrian background, immediately recognized those words. They were words from his deceased uncle. Basically, what he was saying was, "Yes. It is good for you and right for you to go to Ghana and serve there." This was an affirmation or confirmation to this doctor who was not totally sure he should do this.

In another congregation where I was serving, a woman had insomnia for many months. The insomnia began shortly after her mother died. For months she suffered with this. One night her mother appeared at the foot of her bed, not in a dream, and she was sure of that. It was an apparition or vision. There was a sense of peace, not a lot of words or communication, a sense of peace that I'm okay. From then on the insomnia disappeared. To me that was a healing from the other side.

A mother was dying in another parish where I was serving. She had three adult children who had come from different parts of the country to be with her. While their mother was in intensive care she died at night. The next morning each one of the children related that the mother had come to them and assured them that she was all right. They all had dreams almost simultaneously. It is very unusual to have one dream or one awareness in the sleep of someone passing through or over, but here all three had a dream of her. As each one told his or her story, they were flabbergasted.

There is a very thin veil between this plane and the next. I think what we do is to have conferences and have testimonies and encourage each other to keep up the good work.

Veronica Keen: I am quite seriously ill. When I was in a very weak state a few months ago, my doctor asked me to get help from the other side, to have some readings done for guidance. He was doing everything he could think of doing. I got three mediums to do readings. One medium in Ireland I rang said she would do a reading, put it on tape and send it to me.

My husband and I listened to the tape. Right through this tape she kept insisting I had to have Vitamin F, which is Omega 3. I rang my doctor who said, "Great. Get Udo's Oil. That makes sense, do it immediately." I started taking it immediately.

Two weeks ago, I listened to that tape again. There is no mention anywhere on that tape of any Vitamin F or anything to do with it. When my husband came home I said please listen to this tape with me. I thought I was imagining it. He listened and said no. There were no gaps on the tape, nothing. I spoke to the medium on the phone and told her she kept insisting I had to have this Vitamin F. She said, "I've never heard of it, what is it?" I said, "But I've been taking it as it was on the tape." She said, "Don't worry, it's the spirits. I obviously didn't pick it up from them and they wanted to make sure you got it."

I find that absolutely amazing and the other two readings also. One medium, Linda Williamson, in England, got information from my parents about my kidneys that I wasn't aware of as it seems they've never worked properly. I didn't know that. They also said that my liver was in such bad shape even though I'd never drank or smoked, that it's a miracle that I'm alive. They're working hard from the other side.

This is the message that came over from the three mediums. There is so much work going on from the other side to keep me going so that I can help my husband in his work. The fact that the Vitamin F was not on that tape, I am grateful that the information was there.

Bill Alcorn: Just a little postscript. Some of you will find familiar the experience of beginner's luck. Two of the things I've tried came out very clear psychic experiences the first time. One was a remote viewing. I'd done several classes on remote viewing. Before we went to any of them, I pulled out an old Newsweek about three months old and tried an experiment at home. I'm a scientist so I have to do an experiment. The experiment was to pick an arbitrary page number and meditated to clear my mind and see what I could come up with. I meditated 3-5 minutes on a blank piece of paper and came up with five or six things and put down all the images. It was kind of strange, but it was about six things. I turned to page 28 and lo and behold they were all part of the photograph on that page.

It was a picture of a Japanese prime minister resigning in 1998 because of their economic crises and he had a translator's button in his ear and a cord. I got the little microphone in front of him and his cufflinks. It was amazing to me and I said this is real.

A couple of years after that I went to a weekend with a psychic healer in New Jersey with people who had been in the remote viewing groups. The first exercise we did was a medical diagnosis. I have seen Carolyn Myss in action and was bowled over by her accuracy. I paired up with a woman in her 40s who sat right next to me and away we went. We were given instructions on how to clear our conscious mind, how to go up a certain number of feet and how to come down and shine a flashlight into the other person's body and look for dark spots. I followed instructions, went up into the air 62 feet, imagined it, came down and shined the light around. This is kind of silly but I found two dark spots over her left hip and left ankle. She said, "Yes and yes, I am seeing a chiropractor for my hip and an orthopedist for my ankle."

Since then I've talked to energy healers and one of the jokes among them is that you get three free ones before you run into trouble. I think it's all a pattern. The issue is the conscious mind can be fooled for a little while, but it knows how to take over and tell you that you can't do these things. The first time or two you can slip by the conscious mind while it's worrying about other things. That's the lesson we've learned.

Boyce Batey: The most interesting experience I've ever had with synchronicity was once when I asked my older son, "What symbol is inside this apple when I cut it across the core?" He was in love with a Jewish girl at the time and his immediate response was, "A Star of David." I said, "No Adrian, it's a five pointed star, a symbol of man himself." I cut that apple across the core and it was the only apple that I've ever cut in that way and the only one I've ever heard of that had a six pointed star, a Star of David, inside.

Kelly Weaver: A story about a friend Kim Shaffer. Her grandmother was very ill and she went to visit her in the nursing home. Kim said to her grandmother, "Before you die or when you die, can you send me a rainbow?" Grandma was okay enough to say, "Yes and where do you want it?" Kim said, "I want it every where, I want everybody to see it." Grandma said, "Don't worry I won't put it upside down." Kim said, "That's good, the pot of gold won't fall apart."

A couple weeks later Kim and her fiancée were shopping and she suddenly saw a huge, huge rainbow. She thought, oh my gosh, this is it, I know grandma is going to die. This rainbow was out for quite a long time. Kim had asked her grandma to make the rainbow big enough so everybody could see it. This rainbow made the news that night and everybody talked about it. Kim didn't have her camera with her and when she got home she said, "Grandma please let me see this on my back deck, please, please." Grandma was still alive. Kim was worried but she looked out at the back deck and there was the rainbow again. This was about 20 minutes later and she took a picture. Her grandmother died about 24 hours later. Kim knew that it was her rainbow. Grandma performed.

TRACING TWENTY YEARS OF RELIGIOUS AND PSYCHICAL EXPERIENCE OF EMANUEL SWEDENBORG

(With Focus on the Subject of Prayer)

By Don Rose

Gary Schwartz was the keynote speaker at last year's annual meeting of the Academy of Religion and Psychical Research (June 2002). This year Dr. Schwartz gave a lecture in Arizona in which he alluded to Swedenborg's "twenty years." He said, "Swedenborg was, as you know, a very distinguished scientist who at age 56 went through a transition when he went from being a scientist to being a *quote* "mystic," and then spent the next twenty odd years of his life exploring the other side or the larger reality but with the mind of a scientist and the heart of a caring and sensitive human being." (February 10, 2003, Tucson, Arizona).

Here is the sequence I will follow:

- 1) Some connecting of Swedenborg with William James who wrote of varieties of religious and psychical experiences.
- 2) Addressing the subject of PRAYER as a key factor in the subject.
- 3) Tracing the Swedenborg experience.

William James (apart from his personal letters) only mentions Emanuel Swedenborg by name twice in the whole corpus of his printed works. This surprises and even annoys some advocates of Swedenborg's books. But William James came from a family and from a milieu well steeped in Swedenborg. God father to William James was Ralph Waldo Emerson, who was 39 years old when William was born and was one of the Swedenborg-oriented scholars who influenced him. We will presently quote one of Emerson's stirring testimonials about Swedenborg.

The Varieties of Religious Experience (1908) names Swedenborg only once, but there is historical reason for this. Henry James, father of William, may at times have smothered his sons with Swedenborg sayings. And William seems for this reason to have deliberately avoided direct allusions to Swedenborg. But note this: William produced a book called *The Literary Remains of the Late Henry James*. In this book the name of Swedenborg appears frequently; in fact two of its chapters are devoted directly to Swedenborg. It is his father spouting Swedenborg; William merely records it. For example the elder James says of Swedenborg, that "transcendent truths are strewn along his pages as thickly as stars along the milky way" (p. 327).

Dr. Eugene Taylor, author of *Shadow Culture* (Counterpoint 1999) observes that Henry James (father of William) "saw in Swedenborg the potential for a religious science of social transformation ... but he was incapable by his training to do more than sketch the outlines of what this science might mean for mankind." He expected that the task of articulating this science would fall to his heirs, "the most likely candidate being his son

William" (p. 160 *Swedenborg and His Influence*). But, says Taylor, William resisted "the near suffocating influence of his father" (p 161).

As we read *Varieties of Religious Experience* we are aware of the influence of different people, notably the god-father Emerson who wrote:

"The moral insight of Swedenborg, the correction of popular errors, the announcement of ethical laws, take him out of comparison with any other modern writer, and entitle him to a place, vacant for some ages, among the lawgivers of mankind." (*Representative Men*)

Harvard Lecture Series

The William James book, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1908), is taken from his Gifford Lectures of 1902. I would like to speak of another Harvard lecture series as a springboard to consideration of Swedenborg. We go back to 1898 to the Ingersoll Lecture by William James. The title was *On Human Immortality*. He treated of "supposed objections" to the doctrine of immortality. (I will speak of such objections later on.)

We jump ahead more than a century in the Ingersoll Lectures. In the year 2000 the lecturer was Carol Zaleski. Her title, *In Defense of Immortality*. This was followed in 2001 by Huston Smith, *Intimations of Immortality: Three Case Studies*. The three cases are: Swedenborg, Near Death Experiences, and Entheogenic experiences. Huston Smith says, "I begin with Swedenborg."

(Huston Smith is 84 years old. He continues as visiting professor at the University of California, Berkeley. He was for 15 years a professor of philosophy at M.I.T. Among the PBS series he has produced was *The Religions of Man*.)

Smith tells the story of Swedenborg noting that when he was 56 years old God "came to him to announce that he was going to actually show him the afterworld." And in the years thereafter Swedenborg visited the other world almost daily.

Smith notes that one cannot verify Swedenborg's visits to Heaven and Hell in the way one can verify certain paranormal sightings in his life. But here, in Smith's words, is what Swedenborg claims he saw.

"The moment the heart stops we enter the spiritual world. There we have spiritual bodies which function much like our former material ones. Life there is at first so similar to life on earth that some may even need to be instructed that they have died. This World of Spirits is a temporary stopping place. Its essential function is to show us what we really are inwardly. Angels help us here, and on the basis of their instructions we decide whether Heaven or Hell is most suited to us."

Smith continues, "Those who prefer Hell have, in their worldly lives, spiraled in on themselves and lived primarily for themselves."

"Hell is a place of constriction and limitation, for when one spirals inward, one enters the small limited world of self. Heaven is an opening-out world where you work cooperatively with others in harmony with the overall nature of things. Those in Hell can visit Heaven, but they are uncomfortable with the light of understanding there and return to what they are accustomed to." Those in heaven "delight in learning the nature of reality and cooperating with it. This disposition surfaces automatically as the sum of

their life choices before death. . . In Heaven people gather in societies of people who enjoy doing the same kinds of things. There is work to be done in Heaven and these harmonious societies carry out spiritual functions that go far beyond the limited kinds of work we see in this world."

One more paragraph from Smith: "People who live out the love of their lives are happy and useful. 'Uses' figure importantly in Heaven. When we are useful we contribute to the whole. We are also doing what we want to do. So Heaven can be said to be a kingdom of uses. Heaven appears to God as a 'Grand Human' whose organs (the societies in Heaven) work together to make One Life. In the same vein, God sees the multiple churches and religions as coordinated in one Universal Church. Swedenborg as very much ahead of his time in this teaching."

The Human Experience of Prayer

Before tracing the Swedenborg experience I would like to get right into the matter of human prayer, as it is a personal thing involving both religious and psychical experience.

In *Varieties of Religious Experience* William James writes: "The fundamental religious point is that in prayer, spiritual energy, which otherwise would slumber, does become active, and spiritual work of some kind is effected really" (page 477). This is of particular interest because some think of prayer as merely a means for an individual to become reconciled to what is going to happen anyway. That is, they do not see prayer as bringing about something which "otherwise would slumber."

Swedenborg says that the perpetual effort of God "becomes an act" when we implore it. Speaking of our deliverance from specific evil, Swedenborg expresses this as follows in *Doctrine of Charity* (paragraph 203). "He who believes in God says within himself, *Through God I will conquer it*. And he supplicates and prevails. This is not denied to any one, but is granted to all; for the Lord is in the continual effort, from His Divine love, to reform and regenerate man, and so purify him from evils. And when the person also wills and intends it, this perpetual effort of the Lord becomes an act."

In *Divine Providence* (paragraph 296) Swedenborg says: "Nothing is incumbent on man except to remove evils in the external man. All the rest the Lord provides if He is appealed to." We pray, and God acts. "It is a general principle in all Divine worship for man first to will, desire, and pray; and then for the Lord to answer, inform, and do" (*Apocalypse Revealed* 376).

Swedenborg recounts experience with prayer, indicating that he was able to notice things taking place in prayer which also happen with others, but which they may rarely notice consciously. This includes what happens when an individual humbly says the words of The Lord's Prayer.

"When I have said the Lord's Prayer I have felt an elevation toward the Lord, which was like an attraction. At these times my ideas were open, and communication with some communities in heaven was consequently established. I have also noticed that the Lord flowed into each detail of the Prayer, and so into every specific idea in my thought gained form the meaning of the things stated in the Prayer. The influx took place with variety, that is to say, it has not been the same on one occasion as on another" (*Heavenly Secrets* 6476).

Notice that a communication with heavenly communities is mentioned. This is something emphasized by Swedenborg in religious devotion and also in the reading of Scripture. When we are inwardly close to negative spiritual associates it can bring us into doubt about prayer and religious experience. Swedenborg writes, "There were spirits with me who flowed in very strongly into my thought when it was exercised upon such things as were of providence, and especially when I was thinking that the things I awaited and desired were not coming to pass. The angels said that they were spirits who when they lived in the body and prayed for anything and did not obtain it were indignant, and gave way to doubts" (Heavenly Secrets 4653).

Doubt about prayer is an age-old phenomenon. At the conclusion of his Epistle the apostle James anticipates doubt and says: "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (5:17). And Job of old asks Who is the Almighty? "And what profit do we have if we pray to Him?" (21:15). Part of Swedenborg's mission was to alleviate doubt. His preface to *Heaven and Hell* "It has been granted me to describe these things, in the hope that ignorance may thus be enlightened and unbelief dissipated."

In one place where he defines prayer as "speech with God" Swedenborg says that there is in prayer an influx into the thought of the mind and "a certain opening of the person's interiors toward God." In our emotions this brings "hope, comfort and a certain inward joy." These occur as an answer to prayer. (Heavenly Secrets 2535).

"I have been allowed to feel the actual influx, the calling forth of the truths present within me, the linking of them to the objects of prayer, the accompanying affection for good, and the actual raising up." (Heavenly Secrets 10299.)

Swedenborg speaks of prayer using a variety of terms, supplicate, implore, ask, adore, ask. Frequently Swedenborg speaks of "approaching" or "going to" God. He emphasizes that in prayer it is not about method or manner. For when we pray God looks upon our hearts. (Heavenly Secrets 10143:4). He says that in prayer we should humbly submit our request acknowledging that God alone knows whether it is profitable or not. "Therefore the suppliant submits the hearing to the Lord, and immediately after prays that the will of the Lord, and not his own, may be done, according to the Lord's words in His own most grievous temptation at Gethsemane Matt. 26:39)" (Heavenly Secrets 8179).

Auras or "Spheres" as related to Prayer

How can the prayer of one person affect another person? We commonly say at certain times that our prayers "go out" to people who have been bereaved or afflicted. Although people often speak in this manner, some may wonder how it can actually come about. Perhaps what Swedenborg says about "spheres" can be applied to this question.

Swedenborg says interesting things about what he calls *sphaera*. Traditionally this has been translated as "spheres." Modern English translators of Swedenborg's Latin have been using the words "aura," "atmosphere," and "fields of activity."

According to Swedenborg while we are physical inhabitants of a material world, we are also spirits. We live in the spiritual world and are unconsciously associated with "spirits" who have departed this life. We affect other people not only by what we do to or for them and what we say to them, but also by our aura or sphere. To quote from

Swedenborg's *True Christianity*, "There emanates from every person a spiritual sphere which inwardly affects his associates." (paragraph 433).

How do we recognize an individual in the world of the spirit? How might you recognize your mother upon meeting her after death? The recognition is not only from face and voice but from "the sphere of the person's life when they draw near" (Heaven and Hell 494). "There are surrounding auras of spiritual life that emanate from every angel and from every spirit and envelop them. By means of these auras one can recognize even from a distance the quality of the affections of their loves" (Heaven and Hell 17).

The aura or sphere, according to Swedenborg's experience, is something that can be detected in the other life through the senses. "A person's interiors are in a kind of unconscious activity, and from this the quality of the spirit is perceived. That this is so (says Swedenborg) has been become clear to me from the fact that the sphere emanating from this activity not only extends itself to a distance, but sometimes also, when the Lord permits, is in various ways made perceptible to the senses" (Heavenly Secrets 1504).

Swedenborg says that when he encountered people in the other life he was allowed sometimes to detect their "sphere" by sight, a visible cloud or mist surrounding them. Also by smell. This is described in a section of *Heavenly Secrets*, paragraphs 1504-1520. While he lamented the smell seeming to surround sinister spirits, he encountered good spirits who emanated something like a beautiful cloud, and in the presence of angelic spirits he detected an aroma of exquisitely pleasant flowers (paragraph 1519).

There is a "correspondence" of heaven with all things of earth. A chapter of *Heaven and Hell* is devoted to this. (Paragraphs 103-115.) Accordingly the spiritual spheres of heaven correspond to the physical emanations of the natural world. In Swedenborg's day radiation was unknown. But Swedenborg comments on the natural emanations of the physical world to illustrate the spiritual emanations of the other world. He writes, "All things in the world, both animate and inanimate, pour forth from themselves a sphere that is sometimes perceived at a great distance, as from animals in the woods which dogs acutely smell and follow by the scent from step to step; likewise from plants in gardens and forests which send out an odiferous sphere in every direction; also from the soil and its various minerals. But these exhalations are natural exhalations. It is the same in the spiritual world, where from every spirit and angel the sphere of his love flows forth in every direction . . . I can assert (continues Swedenborg) that no spirit or person has a single thought that does not communicate through that sphere with some society. That this is so has not hitherto been known to man, but it has been made evident to me by a thousand experiences in the spiritual world" (*Apocalypse Explained* 889).

Incidentally Swedenborg maintains that the wonders of animal navigation are due to spheres from the spiritual world. Rupert Sheldrake says similar things using the expression "morphogenetic fields." These are discussed in his 1981 book *A New Science of Life* and his 1988 book, *The Presence of the Past*, and the 1999 book, *Dogs That Know When Their Owners Are Coming Home*.

Swedenborg alludes to the existence of "many spheres" surrounding people, the existence of which seems impossible to those who only believe what they can see and touch. Those spheres, he adds, give rise to "many things" which people ascribe to mere chance or to some hidden natural force (*Heavenly Secrets* 5179).

When we pray for the welfare of another person, our prayers may be represented by the smoke of incense rising to God. (The imagery comes from the Book of Revelation chapter 8 verse 4.) A malignant sphere of misfortune may be portrayed as a dark cloud (Heavenly Secrets 6493, 6494). A sphere of good fortune may be portrayed as a bright cloud. Swedenborg says he observed a group of people wishing a blessing upon a married couple. When they expressed their wish, "the room was filled with an aromatic fragrance, a sign of blessing from heaven" (Married Love 20).

Can our prayers for others go out like such a fragrant cloud? Can we affect the welfare of other people? We can exhort others. We can encourage them and comfort them by word and deed. But we do not have power to determine what will become of them, not even our own children. Our prayers are humble petitions which we submit to a wise and loving God as we say, "Nevertheless, not my will, but Yours be done."

TRACING THE SWEDENBORG EXPERIENCE

Swedenborg lived for 84 years—from 1688 to 1772. (Those years are pretty well documented in large biographies as well as a number of short biographical sketches.) When he looked back upon his life as an old man he regarded his early years as a preparation. He saw himself as being prepared to have special experiences that he might write them down to benefit others.

During the first half century of his life he seems to have had no hint that something special was to happen to him. It is interesting to contemplate some historic documents, notably a pair of official letters he wrote when he was at the height of his scholarly vigor.

Two Historic Letters to the Swedish Government

The two somewhat similar historic documents are four years apart. They show a complete change in the life of Emanuel Swedenborg. The first was written to King and country in June of 1743 when Swedenborg was 55 years old. The second was in June of 1747. In the first letter he was requesting permission to leave the country to visit foreign libraries and complete a giant work on human anatomy. The proposed book would come to some four thousand pages. While he was working on this book, his life took an entirely new course. He published his findings on the human body or "The Kingdom of the Soul," but, responding to a "call," he began to study the Hebrew language and embark on a study of the Bible.

On June 2, 1747, he again requested leave to go abroad and this time to retire from his official position on the Board of Mines. He said that he needed to devote himself to "an important work." The official response (dated June 12) to his request expressed confidence that this important work would "benefit the public." (Between 1743 and 1747 things evidently were happening to Swedenborg. I will allude to this in a postscript.)

Benefiting the Public In An Entirely New Way

The advancement of science had been Swedenborg's lifelong endeavor. But in his mid fifties he turned to religion, and we might say "psychical research." The important work to which he devoted himself became volume after volume of books printed in Latin. They were books of theology of Biblical exegesis and of disclosure about the nature of the spiritual world.

Swedenborg's first published work of theology, *Heavenly Secrets*, came out in eight Latin volumes, a volume a year between 1749 and 1756.

A THEOLOGY OF AFFIRMATION

The generalization that comes to me in attempting to characterize these volumes and the other works that followed is the *affirmation* factor. Swedenborg's mission seems to be one aimed at alleviating doubts, rescuing from "the spirit of denial," and promoting positive affirmation. Affirmation of what? The reality of the spiritual world in which we already dwell, the reality of the life that awaits us when we depart the natural world, the existence of God, the nature of His love, and His Providence. And there is the affirmation that the Bible is indeed holy.

Inward Contents of the Bible

The book *Heavenly Secrets* begins with the observation that people are doubting that the Bible, particularly the Old Testament, is holy. As Swedenborg goes through the books of Genesis and Exodus verse by verse phrase by phrase, he repeatedly makes the point that this is to show that the Bible contains far more than meets the eye. The volumes of *Heavenly Secrets* do not pretend to exhaust the contents of the first two books of the Bible. On the contrary. The Bible, says Swedenborg, contains myriads of things. "So many are its arcana that volumes would not suffice for the unfolding of them. A very few only are here set forth" (paragraph 64). At the end of a chapter he will say, "Such are some of the things contained in this chapter of the Word, but those here set forth are but few" (166).

The Reality of Life After Death

A paragraph of *Heavenly Secrets* concludes as follows: "Wherefore let him who wishes to be eternally happy know and believe that he will live after death. Let him think of this and keep it in mind, for it is the truth" (8939).

The earlier part of this sample paragraph includes the following. "I can asseverate that as soon as a man dies he is in the other life, and lives as a spirit among spirits, and that he then appears to himself and to others in that life in all respects like a man in the world, endowed with every sense internal and external; consequently that the death of the body is only the casting off of such things as had served for use and service in the world;

and moreover that death itself is a continuation of life but in another world, which is invisible to the eyes of the earthly body."

He goes on with typical personal testimony. "As I know this from the living experience of so many years, which is still continued, I solemnly declare it. I still speak, and have spoken with almost all whom I had known in the world and who are dead, with some after two or three days from their decease. Very many of them were exceedingly indignant that they had not believed at all in the life which was to continue after death." Notice the reference to disbelief, a matter frequently addressed in these books.

Disbelief In Anything Beyond the Physical Senses

One of the themes of *Heavenly Secrets* is that we need to rise above mere physical appearances. Indeed the serpent in the garden of Eden is said to relate inwardly to what merely sensual thinking does to the human mind. When Swedenborg had completed the volumes of his first work, he then produced the book *Heaven and Hell*. Notice its opening statement of purpose. He says that many people are saying, "Who has come from that world and told us?" And he replies, "Lest, therefore, such a negative attitude which prevails especially with those who have much worldly wisdom, should also infect and corrupt the simple in heart and the simple in faith, it has been granted me to associate with angels and to talk with them person to person, also to see the things in the heavens as well as those in the hells, this for thirteen years. Now., therefore, from what I have seen and heard I am permitted to describe these things, in the hope that thus, ignorance may be enlightened and unbelief dispelled."

Can the unbelieving be convinced? Not if they prefer a negative attitude and are surrounded with a negative "sphere." Would miracles or dramatic demonstrations convince them? Swedenborg writes, "Some are in the habit of saying, *Make me see these things with the eyes, or show me scientifically that it is so, and then I will believe*. And yet if they were to see, and if it were shown, they would not believe, because what is negative dominates" (*Heavenly Secrets* 6015).

Swedenborg recounts experiences with people who persistently deny. He writes, "How difficult it is for men to be brought to believe in the existence of spirits and angels, and still more than anyone can speak with them, has been evidenced to me by the following example.

"There were certain spirits who when they lived in the body had been among the more learned, and had then been known to me . . . They were once brought into a state of thought similar to that which they had had while they lived in the world" (*Heavenly Secrets* 1636). They then began to deny the possibility of speaking with spirits! "From this it was given to know with how much difficulty a man can be brought to believe . . . for the reason that men do not belie in the existence of spirit, and still less that they are themselves to come among them after death."

Belief in a Divine Creator

Five years after the book *Heaven and Hell* Swedenborg published *Divine Love and Wisdom*. This is a book about creation, in which the reader is invited to observe the wonders of nature and to affirm belief in God. Here he says that people may be excused for their doubts, but he invites people to look at the wonders of nature and to freely decide or choose to affirm.

"Any people who want to can decide in favor of Divinity on the basis of what they can see in nature, and people do so decide who base their thinking about God on life. They do this, for example, when they see the birds of the air . . . Anyone who wants to think about the divine inflow through the spiritual world into the physical world can see it in these things" (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 353). At the end of this chapter, having described the marvels of plants and animals Swedenborg appeals to the reader to "Decide for Divinity: there is no lack of material" (DLW 356).

Belief In God's Government of the World

Immediately after *Divine Love and Wisdom*, Swedenborg published *Angelic Wisdom Concerning Divine Providence*. Here he describes typical skeptical attitudes about the providence of a loving God. "The merely natural man says to himself, *What is Divine providence? Is it any thing else or more than a phrase that the common people have learned from the priest? Who sees anything of it?* ... So says the merely natural man; but the spiritual man speaks otherwise . . . He who thinks that God governs all things thinks that they are governed by Love itself and Wisdom itself, thus by Life itself" (*Divine Providence* 182).

This theme of affirmation continues through to his final published work, sometimes called *The Universal Theology*. One example from this book is the observation that no two faces in the human race are identical. Swedenborg discourses at length on there being no two faces exactly alike nor can there ever be. This would not be possible, he asserts, unless there were an Infinity in God the Creator.

The End

Postscript.

I have alluded to a change that took place in Swedenborg's life between 1743 and 1747. It was not until half a century after Swedenborg's death that a notebook was discovered which has come to be called *The Journal of Dreams*. This consists of Swedenborg's personal jottings over a period of several months. These were in Swedish, and were written while he was daily engaged in his anatomical studies (written in Latin). The reader may wish to consult my article *The Pivotal Change in Swedenborg's Life*. This is to be found in the 1988 volume published by the Swedenborg Foundation entitled *EMANUEL SWEDENBORG, A CONTINUING VISION*.

Biographical note on Don Rose

Born in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, Don Rose received his college degrees from the Academy of the New Church and from the University of Grenoble in southern France. After ordination into the ministry, he began his working life in New Zealand and Australia where he was married. His family moved from Australia to Europe in 1963. There he served for nine years as visiting pastor to congregations in Holland and France while residing in London. From England he moved to Pittsburgh, PA and from there to Bryn Athyn, PA where he now edits a monthly magazine of Swedenborg studies. He also serves as assistant pastor at the Bryn Athyn cathedral.

ONE LAST HUG BEFORE I GO: THE MYSTERY AND MEANING OF DEATHBED VISIONS

Carla Wills-Brandon, Ph.D.

The following discussion examines the many facets of the deathbed vision experience. Wills-Brandon has been investigating this phenomenon for fifteen years and has collected over 2,000 accounts. What she has discovered is that DBV encounters are similar from experienter to experienter, and that the experience itself crosses all cultural, sexual, religious and social boundaries. DBVs are encountered by not only the dying but by those who care for them. Along with this, DBVs can be experienced days, weeks, and even months before actual physical death occurs. Numerous examples of the DBV encounter are presented.

Deathbed visions have played a very important role in both my personal and professional life. In my personal life, they have assisted me in processing my own grief. Because of my encounter with these visions, I know for certain that life goes on after physical death. The comfort that comes from understanding my departed loved ones are safe—alive and well on the other side—is boundless.

When someone I know passes away, I am sad that I will no longer be able to talk, hug, sit, have a meal or physically be with that person. My grief isn't related to never seeing them again. My sense of loss is more about not being able to reach out and readily "touch" my loved ones in the here and now. This change in the state of the relationship is what I most grieve.

Over the years I have learned that with death, only the method of interpersonal connecting changes. The dying appear to move on to a new existence, leaving us here to finish out our tasks in this life. In spite of these alterations, love continues to cross all boundaries. Investigation into this phenomena has proven this to me repeatedly. Knowing what I know about life after death, I often wonder which one of my deceased relatives will greet me at death's door. As I take my last few breaths, who will lovingly extend the hand of comfort to me? I find most exciting and reassuring the prospect of a future family reunion with long-lost loved ones.

My favorite type of deathbed visions have always involved visitation from deceased family members. Such visitations soothe both the living and the dying. They make the death transition easier for the dying and lessen the burden of grief for surviving family members. In some cases, even long-standing family disputes appear to be resolved. Consider the following account.

On May 22, 1972, the Duke of Windsor took his last breath. His abdication

of the English throne and subsequent marriage to the American divorcée Wallis Simpson had given his mother, Queen Mary, a great deal of grief. According to an article by Ian Watson, in a November 1986 issue of the "Sunday Telegraph", when dying the Duke was heard quietly saying, "Mama . . . Mama . . . Mama . . . Mama" just before he died. Do you think Queen Mary came to escort her son, who had caused her such pain during her time on earth, to the afterlife?

People who are close to death commonly call out the name of a dead relative. To finally reunite with loved ones who have passed on must be a wonderful feeling. Centuries ago, as a man or woman lay dying—surrounded by loved ones, with a favorite pet at the foot of the bed—seeing deceased relatives was viewed as a normal affair. Those at the deathbed would often ask, "Who do you see? How are they? Do they have a message for me?" Today, such events continue to occur, but are we listening? Are we open to the lessons of the dying?

With deaths taking place more often than not in hospitals and nursing homes, DBVs are often dismissed. Periodically, a kind nurse or doctor does take note and offers support. In reading the following DBVs, notice how comforted the dying person is at seeing a familiar face from the other side. Jenny Randles and Peter Hough offer us the following account from their book, "The Afterlife" (1993).

"Sheila Mendoza is a charge nurse who works in the intensive care unit wards of a large hospital in Texas. She has watched many people die and admits that she had become rather hardened to the process. However, nothing prepared her for one night in 1982 when the most remarkable event that she had ever witnessed was to take place.

Sheila was on night shift, paying special attention to a man who had been in the hospital for some days. Although under close care, he was not thought to be in any danger nor seriously ill.

At about 8 p.m. he began talking very lucidly about a loved one whom he longed to see. Sheila could not tell who this person was, but it was obvious that the man had not seen her in many years and never expected to do so again. The impression is that she must have passed away some years before. The man then slipped from his mumbling into a restless sleep.

At about 9:30 he began talking about this person again, and his vital signs also began to fall. Fearing the worst, more medical staff was brought in, but the man slid into a comatose state.

Then the patient became wonderfully alert, as some people do very near the end. He looked to one side, staring into vacant space. As time went by, it was clear he could see someone there whom nobody else in the room could see. Suddenly, his face lit up like a beacon. He was staring and smiling at what was clearly a long-lost friend, his eyes so full of love and serenity that it was hard for those around him to not be overcome by tears.

Sheila says: 'There was no mistake. Someone had come for him at the last to show him the way.' Minutes later the man died, in a state of sublime peace and happiness.

From that day Sheila Mendoza looked upon her dying patients with new eyes and dignity. Like so many others who care for the terminally ill, she had witnessed that precious moment when life slips all ties to a battered, broken

body and moves on toward who knows where."

Who was this long-lost family member or friend? Only the dying man will ever know. What is important to recognize is that this reunion somehow prepared him for his death. This vision enabled him to easily pass on to the next stage of existence. It also taught the health-care worker a vital lesson about working with the terminally ill.

The medical community—actually, all of us—can learn many lessons from the dying and DBVs. In the following account, a mother hears from a dying aunt details regarding her deceased daughter's existence in the afterlife. This experience brings this mother a sense of joy and relief. Not only is she reassured that her daughter is well, but the mother quickly recognizes that her dying aunt will also be cared for when she passes.

"A few years ago my husband's aunt had a serious stroke and was unconscious in the hospital for a few days. My daughter had died a year or so earlier. I was "speaking" (out loud) to my daughter who had passed and told her it looked like her great aunt would be joining her soon and told her it would be nice if she could visit her. Yes, I'm still a typical mother when it comes to my daughter (even though she is dead).

My mother-in-law and several other family members were at my aunt's side when she suddenly woke up. She wanted to talk about my dead daughter. She said she had seen her. My aunt said that my daughter looked beautiful. She added that she was fine and so very safe. She then said my daughter was with God. The family didn't like hearing this kind of talk and they kept trying to change the subject, but my aunt wanted to continue talking about my daughter. It was strange that she mentioned my daughter, because she had lost other people who were much closer to her. She died two days later. I was glad my mother-in-law shared this with me."

Just one of the innumerable gifts of DBVs is that messages from the dying about other deceased relatives can heal old wounds. Sadly, many of these messages go unheard. Society doesn't yet see these visions as normal. As a result, dying individuals experiencing DBVs are often mis-diagnosed, disregarded, ignored, heavily medicated or shut away. Unaware family members often have an extremely difficult time understanding why Dad is talking to Uncle Joe, because Uncle Joe has been dead for twenty years. Many health-care workers dismiss DBVs as hallucinations by telling family members things like, "Your father is delusional," or "He doesn't know what he is saying."

Hopefully, as time goes on, our culture will gain greater awareness of this phenomena. When such acceptance occurs, more families will greet DBVs as opposed to retreating from them. As was often the case a century ago, visions and otherworldly reunions will once again be viewed as a benefit to all present at the deathbed. For example, the following deathbed reunion was very enlightening for one of America's most famous spiritual leaders.

Evangelist Dr. Billy Graham was with his grandmother the day she died. According to a quote in George Gallup Jr.'s work, "Adventures in Immortality" (1983), Graham's grandmother, who had been very weak, suddenly sat up and announced she was seeing her deceased husband, Ben. Dr. Graham's grandfather fought in the Civil War and had lost a leg and an eye during battle. Just before she died, Graham's grandmother said, "There is Ben, and he has

both of his eyes and both of his legs!"

The grandmother left this world with a sense of exaltation at seeing her beloved husband whole and healed. The vision must have also been very comforting to Dr. Graham. Today, Dr. Graham is one of the most revered spiritual leaders in the United States. What impact might this particular DBV have had on Dr. Graham's concept of life after death?

When a dying person has a DBV, surrounding family members are often better able to let go of their loved one. One beautiful DBV account comes from a delightful woman named Gladys. In this touching account, Gladys encourages her beloved husband to leave his ill body. Her husband's DBV made the dying process easier on both of them.

"My husband Bryan died of cancer on August 29, 1995. With help from the local hospice, an attendant, named Morris, was hired to come in and help me on Mondays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The first thing I asked Morris to do in the mornings was change Bryan's bed. Since Bryan had bone cancer, any movement was painful. During the final hours of his life, I was standing at the foot of the bed while Morris was moving Bryan. As Morris moved him he said, 'Bryan, I am trying to be easy with you,' to which Bryan responded, 'Don't sweat the little things.'

He was allowed to come home two weeks before his death. We had been married for forty-four years and had our share of spats, but never once did either of us feel unloved. I like to call that last two weeks (before he died) our last 'honeymoon.' We were very open with the fact that he was dying, and we talked at great lengths about heaven and if we would know each other when I got there.

Then Bryan looked straight at me and said, 'Mama! Mama!' I knew at that time he was not seeing me, but his mother who was waiting for him in heaven. I also knew the moment his body died that an angel had come to take his soul home. He died at 4:15 the next morning. . . . I rubbed his head and told him to please let go and go to God. . . . I had given him the greatest of love by asking God to take his hand and lead him home. . . . (Bryan was) the greatest man that ever lived in my life."

For those preparing to travel to the other side of the veil, recognizing that family members are waiting must be extremely reassuring. Science unfortunately continues to downplay DBVs. In this age of science, popular belief holds that we die alone. My surgeon, physician father-in-law was for years a firm believer in the rigid laws of science. When the topic of life after death would come up in conversation, Pop would say, "We become worm food and that is it! Lights out! We just expire! The end!" I bet he was surprised when he ended up in an afterlife world!

Many of the DBVs I've documented relate to contact with parents and parent figures who have died. The next DBV was taken from "Psychic Research and the Resurrection" by J. H. Hyslop (1908). This absolutely beautiful narrative was given by a Dr. Wilson of New York. Dr. Wilson was at the deathbed of famous American tenor James Moore. The account is well known among DBV researchers.

"It was about four o'clock and the dawn for which he had been waiting was creeping in through the shutters, when, as I bent over the bed, I noticed his face

was quite calm and his eyes clear. The poor fellow looked up into my face, and taking my hand in both of his, he said, 'You've been a good friend to me, Doctor. You've stood by me.' Then something which I shall never forget to my dying day happened, something which is utterly indescribable. While he appeared perfectly rational and as sane as any man I have ever seen, the only way that I can express it is that he was transported into another world, and although I cannot satisfactorily explain the matter to myself, I am fully convinced that he entered the Golden City, for he said in a stronger voice than he had used since I attended him, 'There is Mother! Why, Mother, have you come to see me? No, no, I'm coming to see you. Just wait Mother, I'm almost over. I can jump it. Wait, Mother.' On his face there was a look of inexpressible happiness, and the way in which he said the words impressed me as I have never been before, and I am (as) firmly convinced that he saw and talked with his mother as I am that I am sitting here.

In order to preserve what I believe to be his conversation with his (deceased) mother, and also to have a record of the strangest happening of my life, I immediately wrote down every word he said. . . . His was one of the most beautiful deaths I have ever seen."

Across the unknown, one more mother comes to escort her beloved child to the next world, as if the maternal instinct to protect offspring continues after the physical body has disintegrated. With the passage of time and boundaries of death, motherly love can continue. I recently received the following DBV account of a one-hundred-year-old woman who had a blessed visit from her mother just before she passed.

"My mother died in 1976. Her sister-in-law died a few years later, one week prior to her one hundredth birthday. For about a week before her death (she was not ill and was perfectly lucid at all times), she began giving daily announcements to the family about visits with her mother. This, I say, happened every day. She died peacefully at the end of the week."

A call from Mom from the beyond! Is this only an American phenomena or is it a cross-cultural experience? The next account answers this question. The following DBV comes from Osis and Haraldsson's collection of deathbed visions in "At the Hour of Death." Here, a young Hindu boy is passing. The nurses and doctors at his deathbed shared this vision with Dr. Osis.

"He often talked about (his mother). . . . He mentioned her . . . very affectionately. The day he died he had no fever but he said, 'My time has come' to his father. 'My mother is calling. She is standing with her arms open.' At that moment his state of mind was clear. He was conscious of his surroundings and talked to his father until the last moment. Then, with one hand holding his father's and the other pointed toward where he saw his mother, he said, 'Don't you see Mother? See!' . . . Then he died, stretching forward to [her] . . . almost falling out of bed. He was so happy to see her!"

Most mothers want to be there for their children, as though the desire to "mother" continues in the afterlife. To see what I mean, read the next account.

"My sister had cancer and was living out her last days at home. Every time I walked past her room, she seemed to be talking to someone. One day, I was outside her bedroom door and I heard her ask for a glass of water, so I went to get her one. When I took it into her room, she looked at me and said, 'Oh,

thank you. You didn't have to bring it. I had already asked Mom to bring me a drink.'

Our mother had been dead for years, so I asked her who she had been talking with. She said she had been talking to our mother!"

What is so interesting about these visions is not only their impact on the dying, but their effect on those who previously would never have even considered such visitations possible. The dying man in the following narrative appears to be totally surprised with the sudden appearance of his mother-in-law.

"My mother lived with us throughout our marriage. A few months ago, my husband—who I must say does not believe in any of these kind of experiences—told me that my [deceased] mom was in the house. It would take something very dramatic for my husband to make such a statement."

As the moment of death draws near, nonbelievers are often surprised with a DBV. The man in the previous example never would have expected his mother-in-law to return from the dead. Imagine his astonishment when he realized his mother-in-law was revisiting her old stomping grounds!

When my time to die arrives, I strongly suspect my mother, who died many years ago, will return to my side, and I have often wondered what our reunion will be like. Knowing my mother, if she does visit my deathbed, she will probably tell me how to die! You think I'm joking? Read the following DBV report, in which a dying woman receives specific directions from a deceased mate on what to do at the moment of death.

"On February 14 my mother said to the nurse, 'Today is Valentine's Day. Too bad my husband can't be with me. Perhaps I will see him today.' She later said my dad came to see her and said that she will see a bright light and to turn right and he will be there waiting for her. Then she said that she needed to get ready to die and began to pray and sing."

My belief is that the personality continues after death. If someone is loving in this life, who's to say they won't be loving in the next existence? If a husband had provided support and assistance to his wife while alive, it only makes sense this pattern of behavior would continue after death.

Am I alone in my belief? Interestingly, these visions and experiences are actually common to many dying people. Recent studies on the DBV experience have provided some interesting numbers. Although only about 10% of people are conscious shortly before their death, of this particular group, 50% to 67% have DBVs.

DBVs can be found throughout historical literature and lore, but they were rarely mentioned in the scientific literature until the late 1920's. At this point in time they were studied by Sir William Barrett, a physics professor at the Royal College of Science in Dublin.

He would never have considered examining such a topic had it not been for an experience told to him by his wife, an obstetrical surgeon. On the night of January 12, 1924, she arrived home from the hospital eager to tell her husband about a case she had had that day.

She had been called into the operating room to deliver the child of a woman named Doris (her last name was withheld from the written report). Although the child was born healthy, Doris was dying from a hemorrhage. As the doctors waited helplessly next to the dying woman, she began to see things. As Lady Barrett tells it:

"Suddenly she looked eagerly towards part of the room, a radiant smile illuminating her whole countenance. 'Oh, lovely, lovely,' she said. I asked, 'What is lovely?' 'What I see,' she replied in low, intense tones. 'What do you see?' 'Lovely brightness - wonderful beings.' It is difficult to describe the sense of reality conveyed by her intense absorption in the vision. Then - seeming to focus her attention more intently on one place for a moment - she exclaimed, almost with a kind of joyous cry, 'Why, it's Father! Oh, he's so glad I'm coming; he is so glad. It would be perfect if only W. (her husband) would come too.'

Her baby was brought for her to see. She looked at it with interest, and then said, 'Do you think I ought to stay for baby's sake?' Then, turning toward the vision again; she said, 'I can't - I can't stay; if you could see what I do, you would know I can't stay.'

Although the story thus far was compelling, skeptics could still argue that it was nothing more than a hallucination due to lack of blood or triggered by fear of death. Indeed Sir William Barrett may have made that very point to his wife. Then he heard the rest of the story. It seems that the sister of Doris, Vida, had died only three weeks earlier. Since Doris was in such delicate condition, the death of her beloved sister was kept a secret from her. That is why the final part of her deathbed vision was so amazing to Barrett.

"She spoke to her father, saying, 'I am coming,' turning at the same time to look at me, saying, 'Oh, he is so near.' On looking at the same place again, she said with a rather puzzled expression, 'He has Vida with him,' turning again to me saying, 'Vida is with him.' Then she said, 'You do want me, Dad; I am coming.'

Could all this have merely been wish fulfillment expressed in the form of a hallucination? Barrett considered such an explanation, but he rejected it because among the apparitions of the dead was someone whom Doris had not expected to see. Her sister, Vida, had died three weeks before. This explains why Doris was a bit surprised when she saw her sister. This story was so inspirational to Barrett that he undertook a systematic study of deathbed visions. His was the first scientific study to conclude that the mind of the dying patient is often clear and rational. He also reported a number of cases in which medical personnel or relatives present shared the dying patient's vision.

The work of Sir William Barrett did not contribute to the theory that these visions were a form of wish fulfillment. In fact the deathbed vision often did not portray the type of afterlife the dying expected. For example, Barrett reported several children who were disappointed to see angels with no wings. In one such case he described a dying girl who sat up suddenly in her bed and said, "Angels, I see angels." Then the girl was puzzled. "Why aren't they wearing wings?" If deathbed visions were simply a fantasy of the mind, says Barrett, why did this little girl see something different from her expectations?

What exactly is a DBV? Deathbed visions come in all shapes and sizes. Some people receive visitations from deceased relatives while others encounter angels, or religious figures. Many of the accounts I have discuss seeing a wisp of "something" leaving the body of a friend or relative at the moment of passing. DBVs are a different phenomenon than after-death visitations. After-death visitations are visions of deceased loved one(s) by people who are not near death. DBVs usually occur when someone is very close to death and they see visions of deceased loved ones who greet them to help the dying make the transition of death. These experiences can even take the form of a near-death experience. DBVs can occur even days before a person dies. Many terminally ill people will experience these visitations to help prepare them for when they cross over to the other side. DBVs also occur to family members in the vicinity of a dying loved one. Such encounters reassure them that their dying loved one will be safe and will live on. This phenomena is nothing new. It has been described over and over again, for as long as time can remember.

Those who are about to leave will often talk about seeing beautiful landscapes on the other side and then state this is where they will be after they pass. In most cases, once one has had such a vision, death is no longer something to fear. DBVs bring comfort not only to the dying, but to those who love them.

"Yes, my Da is going to the sky!" My own son had a powerful DBV when he was just 3 years of age. Visited by an other worldly creature who shared he was here to take my father in law with him, left my son confident his Da was all right. Da," as my two boys lovingly called their grandfather, was over 6 feet tall. He was a decorated war hero who had rescued all of the relatives in concentration camps after Hitler's fall. Yes, Da was very special. As a physician, he worked until he was 83 years of age, out living most of his patients. A loving grandfather, he always enjoyed a good romp with my two boys. At times, my father in law was a kid himself. He exercised weekly and loved taking his 2 dogs Teri and Cleo, out for their nightly walk. Being very independent, Da was devastated when a stroke left him bed ridden.

As his passing drew near, extended family members periodically took turns sitting with him. Though this was of great help, most of the casemaking responsibility rested on the shoulders of my husband and myself. One evening, my husband announced that he would be spending the night with his father at the hospital. He knew between caring for Da and the boys I was worn out and suggested I try to get a good night's sleep. After packing up a freshly baked batch of chocolate chip cookies for my husband to munch on that evening at the hospital, I put the boys to sleep, fell into bed and slept soundly myself.

The next morning, I awoke to find my husband's face in my face. He was lying in the bed cuddled up next to me. Though he looked very tired, he had a huge grin on his face. After rubbing the sleep out of my eyes, I sat up in bed and said, "So? How are you? How is Da?" With this tears began to fall from his eyes. "His time is near," he replied. "I saw his soul begin to take flight."

"Tonight while snoozing in the chair in his room, I had a wonderful dream about Da. In this dream he said to me he was going soon, but that he would always watch over us. Upon awakening, I looked over at Da as he slept and noticed he was very at ease. Suddenly, I saw something rise from his body. It was absolutely beautiful. A whirl of pastel color, vibrant in not only appearance but also movement, was leaving his chest area. It was so comforting." The following week, Da gently passed away in my husband's arms.

That night my husband experienced a powerful visual DBV. In my books, "A Glimpse of Heaven: The Remarkable World of Spiritually Transformative Experiences" (2003) and "One Last Hug Before I Go: The Mystery And Meaning Of Deathbed Visions," (2000) I share one DBV account after another from care givers who have been at the bedside of someone passing. Countless hospice workers have witnessed what they believe to be the soul leaving the body at the moment of physical death. Visions of deceased relatives, angels or celestial beings of light have also been reported by those who work with the terminally ill.

If you yourself have had an other worldly vision which you feel is connected to the passing of a loved one, you are not alone. If your dying loved one has shared with you tales of visitations by deceased relatives, loved ones or other beings, know that what they were seeing was real. Possibly your friend or dear one who was passing talked about visiting a beautiful place while sleeping, or maybe they shared with you that they had "talked to God," "Jesus," "the angel of death," "angels in white," or "light beings." These are not uncommon statements from those who are passing.

My basic reason for investigating the DBV experience began with my desire to enlighten society about life after death. I wanted to show the public at large that the DBVs have been with us for centuries. I believe it is time for us to do as our ancestors did in generations gone by. We need to once again, pay attention to the words of those who are leaving this world

Visitations to caretakers from deceased relatives or even the dying person can also take place during dream time. At the moment of my own mother's passing, I awoke in my bed at home knowing deep in my soul, that my mother, who was in the hospital had died. A phone call 10 minutes later confirmed this. At the time I was 16 years of age. Here is another example of a dream time DBV.

"I was asleep at home. My mother had been very ill for sometime. I had traveled to the home of my youth to be with her, but had eventually needed to leave her side to care for my young children. When I left my mother's nursing home room, I had known I would never see her again. Flying home, my grief was overwhelming. The night I returned home I was both physically and emotionally exhausted. After dinner with my husband and children, I went to bed. During the middle of the night, I awoke from a very deep sleep. I had dreamed my mother had come to visit me.

In this dream, she was with my father who had passed 5 years ago. Both of

them looked happy and healthy. My mother blew me a kiss. Then she and my father turned around and walked off, over a hill. When I awoke, tears filled my eyes, but I also felt a sense of peace. My parents had looked so joyful. I looked at the clock and noted it was 3 AM, then lay back down and went to sleep. The next morning my brother called to tell me my mother had left us. When I asked him about the time of her death, he replied she had passed at 3 AM."

As I mentioned earlier, the individual who is about to die will often report other worldly visitations. "Don't you see her? My (deceased) mother is here! She has come to take me with her!" or "There are angels everywhere! They are lovely! They want me to go with them!" or "I have been to the other side and it is just beautiful! I'm ready to die" or "I just had a talk with God. All is well," are comments the dying will often make weeks, days, hours or moments before passing. Let's take a look at another other worldly visitation.

"My father had been very ill all year long. I had moved in with him to care for him and had been living at the house for about 6 months. The doctors had told me there was nothing more that they could do and that it was important to make him as comfortable as possible. Being close to my father I did not mind putting my own life on hold to care for him during his final days. He had lost a tremendous amount of weight and friends and family knew his time was near. One afternoon I noticed he was staring intently at the ceiling. When I would ask him a question, he would turn his gaze toward me, answer my question and then look back at the ceiling. That evening, I walked in to find him in deep conversation with someone. Looking at the corner of his room, he would nod, and then say, 'Yes, I understand.' Nod again and then reply, 'Ok.' The next morning, I asked him, 'Whom were you talking to?' With this he answered, 'A very nice lady has been visiting me. She said we are going on a trip together.' My father had several more conversations with this 'nice lady' before passing away the following week."

Caretakers who are unaware that deathbed visions are common, spiritual experiences the dying often encounter before passing, can feel confused and even frightened upon hearing such reports. Medical personnel will often say that such visions are the by-product of a dying brain or medication. Sadly, such explanations cannot completely explain the DBV phenomenon and they take from the spiritual significance of such encounters.

DBVs have a specific purpose. That purpose is to ease the transition from this world to the next for the dying and those who are taking care of them. When we as caretakers understand that DBVs are a positive, affirming experience, we can better assist those we love who are departing. Departing visions provide comfort not only to the dying, but also to those who love and care for them.

Could they be creations of the dying brain - a kind of self-induced sedative to ease the dying process? Although this is a theory offered by many in the scientific community, I don't agree. The visitors in the visions are almost always deceased relatives or friends who have come specifically to offer support to the dying person. In some situations, the dying do not know these visitors are

already dead. In other words, why would the dying brain only produce visions of people who are dead, whether the dying person knew they were dead or not?

And what about the effects of medication? Many of the individuals who have these visions are not on medications and are very coherent. Those who are on medications also report these visions, but the visions are similar to those who are not on medications.

When confronted with someone who has experienced a DBV, clergy, medical personnel and mental health professionals often don't listen. Listening objectively to DBV experience is a must. As one physician said to me, "It's extremely important to take the time to listen to patients, especially when sharing strong spiritual experiences such as deathbed visions or near death experiences." Such shares can provide comfort to grieving family and spiritual healing for the one experiencing the encounter.

Mental health professionals must also approach these encounters with an open mind. "The history of psychology is loaded with examples of spiritual investigation," says psychology professor Alex Seigel. Dr. Seigel believes that the mental health professions should always take time to listen to spiritual encounters such as DBVs, before categorizing them as delusional thinking. William James writings are full of examples of spirituality as it relates to human consciousness and he is one of the fathers of modern psychology.

My dear friend Rabbi Jimmy Kessler uses the DBVs of the dying to assist them as they cross over, from this life to the next. He too believes it is extremely important to support and validate those who have DBVs, or related spiritual experiences. All three of these professionals agree that when assisting an experiencer, comments such as the following should be avoided:

1. "I believe these experiences are just a fabrication of the mind."
2. "I recently read research which suggests that these experiences are only the by-product of a dying brain."
3. "I really think your dying relative or friend was only hallucinating. S/he wasn't really seeing anything."
4. "You have been under tremendous stress, and I really do feel your mind has begun to play tricks on you."
5. "You (your friend/your relative) didn't actually see, hear or feel that. You are making too much out of this, and I don't believe this is good for you."
6. "Our church/temple/religion doesn't acknowledge such things."
7. "These visions are not of God. They are evil."
8. "You are in grief over your loss (or fearful of death). During these trying times, we all want to believe in such things. I suspect this is just wishful thinking."

The above remarks are based on personal experiences, religious belief systems and life philosophies. They reflect very biased opinions. Although they maybe true for a particular health-care giver, they can quickly eradicate and negate any healing potential that an After Death Communication, Near Death Experience, Out of Body Experience or Death Bed Vision may possess for an experiencer. In most instances, such remarks are damaging. Silence, accompanied by a silent nod of the head would be more compassionate and

healing. The above comments should be replaced with the following supportive, nurturing open ended questions;

1. "How has this experience bettered your life? What feelings are you having about this?"
2. "What comfort did the vision or experience provide for you?"
3. "Have you learned anything from this experience?"
4. "How has this experience improved your view of you, the world around you and your spirituality?"
5. "What can you take from this experience and apply to improve the quality of your life?"

The above questions are free of personal bias and can be used by any helping professional. If care takers feel comfortable with such spiritual encounters, further validating comments can be made.

1. "Yes, I believe you! What a powerful experience. Tell me more!"
2. "I don't know what to tell you. This is incredible. Let me ask around to see if I can find any resources that might better help you understand your experience."
3. "It sounds like you have had an exciting, life-transforming event. You might need to spend some time processing this. Though I'm not familiar with such things, I'd be more than happy to hook you up with someone who is. Are you interested?"
4. "I too had a similar encounter. Would you like to hear about it?"
5. "Other people have shared with me experiences which sound just like yours. Can I share these with you?"

Last September, my 88 year old mother-in-law passed. Because my family was aware of the DBV phenomenon, we were able to witness and assist Elizabeth in her passage from beginning to end. Her communication with her deceased mother who died in the Nazi gas chambers and her comical arguments with my deceased father-in-law about crossing over were not seen as unusual, hallucinations, or cause for concern. Our family saw these experiences, conversations with already departed loved ones, as gifts, gifts to be treasured. My mother-in-law's DBVs brought great comfort to all of us, including her sister who survived the Nazi death camps and witnessed horrific loss of life. My hope is that as time marches on, my own unique experiences with DBVs will no longer be seen as unique. Hopefully in the future, the DBV will be accepted as a common, natural, healthy, part of our transition from this life to the next.

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**PURPORTED AFTER-DEATH COMMUNICATION AND ITS ROLE IN THE
RECOVERY OF BEREAVED INDIVIDUALS:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY**

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Abstract: After-death communication (ADC) events are common, natural, non-pathological, and helpful in facilitating the grieving process. This study explored the lived experience of seven self-selecting participants reporting 40 ADC events. Eight themes emerged from the phenomenological analysis of semi-structured interviews. In addition to confirming existing research, a new finding suggests stages in the grieving process similar to the self-actualization process characteristic of exceptional human experiences (EHEs). Although findings are not generalized to larger populations of bereaved, participants experienced, as a result of their ADCs, long-term, liberating, transformational changes in awareness of self, relationship with the deceased, and new understanding of the meaning of life, death, and the divine.

Introduction

This article is a condensed version of the above-titled doctoral dissertation. The dissertation was approved in May, 2002, on behalf of the California Institute for Human Science, by Committee Chair Edie Devers, R.N., Ph.D., and Committee Members Stanley Krippner, Ph.D., and David Jacobs, Ph.D.

Although after-death communication (ADC) is no longer officially regarded by the psychological community to be necessarily hallucinatory or pathological, the role of ADC in recovery from deep grief is not yet clearly defined, well understood, or socially supported; therefore the original focus of this inquiry was (1): to find out more about how ADC facilitates in its experiencers the resolution or healing of grief, and specifically explore that particular moment during an ADC when the percipient experiences a complete and *spontaneous* healing of the pain of grief; and (2) help to de-stigmatize the ADC phenomenon so that bereaved individuals can be better served by health practitioners and psychological counselors.

In phenomenological research the researcher is required to reveal personal biases toward the research rather than try to pretend they do not exist. It then becomes the task of the researcher to use the process of bracketing to set aside those biases so that the unique experiences of the co-researchers can be considered in their own light. I chose this topic because I had experiences with my grandmother when I was 10, and life-changing ADCs with my father when I was 33, and my husband 11 years later. I was compelled to find out more about the phenomenon. A personal paradigm shift is not unlike a macrocosmic social paradigm shift, described by Kuhn (1970) as occurring when an accumulation of anomalous experiences reaches critical mass; then things previously unacceptable become an accepted part of everyday life.

Guggenheim and Guggenheim (1995) coined the term "after-death communication" when they created The ADC Project in May, 1988. Herein, ADC is defined as a spontaneously experienced contact with a deceased loved one, and excludes ADC experiences facilitated by a medium or a psychomanteum.

In phenomenological research, anything that presents itself to consciousness is of potential interest, whether the object is imagined or real, subjectively felt or empirically measurable. The study did not attempt to demonstrate that consciousness survives death;

what is important is that ADC percipients believe that it does, and their experiences help them recover from loss, and live meaningful lives. Because it is cumbersome to constantly disclaim the reality of ADC, it is acknowledged that these events are purported to occur, leaving interpretation to the reader. The study did not include anyone who had a negative and subsequently discarded ADC experience. It is important to note that although ADC is comforting, it does not preclude the grieving process.

American culture generally denies death (Wass, Berardo, & Neimeyer, 1988) and the grieving process of survivors (Rosenblatt, Walsh, & Jackson, 1976). As a result, grieving members of society have had little support and have been reluctant to discuss their experiences, fearing that their experiences would be invalidated as grief-induced hallucinations or wishful thinking (Devers, 1987, 1994; Glick, Weiss, & Parkes, 1974; Kalish & Reynolds, 1973; MacLaren, 1980; Parkes, 1970; Rees, 1971, Stevenson, 1983; Whitney, 1982; Yamamoto, Okonogi, Iwasaki, & Yoshimura, 1969).

Several researchers looked at the relationship between validation and support of the bereaved person's ADC experiences and their recovery: Berger (1995), in examining the relevance of belief in life after death to bereavement, found that although many professional counselors dismiss contact experiences as hallucinatory and the belief in life after death as superstitious, bereaved individuals whose beliefs in life after death are validated are able to restructure their lives more effectively. Windholtz, Marmar, and Horowitz (1985) found that a bereaved individual's perception of social support contributes to better adjustment after loss.

The ADC Phenomenon

ADC experiences occur along a continuum of intensity and emotional impact. They can be uneventful and unemotional; sometimes frightening or disturbing. Published research has established that they are common, natural, non-pathological, mostly beneficial and comforting, helpful in facilitating the grieving process, and sometimes extraordinarily spiritually healing to a bereaved individual (Barrett, 1991, 1992; Berger, 1995; Bowlby, 1980; Devers, 1987, 1988, 1997; Guggenheim, 1995; LaGrand 1997; Glick, Weiss, & Parkes, 1974; Kalish & Reynolds, 1973; MacLaren, 1990; Marris, 1958; Parkes, 1998; Rees, 1971; Whitney, 1992).

An example of an ADC is: Judy's daughter was clinically depressed because of her brother's recent death and had to come home from college. After picking up the daughter at the airport and returning home, Judy let their two dogs out and then back in for the night. Judy, her daughter and husband were in an upstairs bedroom, having left the dogs two floors down and inside the house. Moments later there was a frantic scratching at the balcony door and they opened it for the distraught dog who dashed in. There was no way for the dog to have gotten outside and up fifteen feet to the balcony by itself, and they all intuitively knew that the son had psychokinetically moved the dog to get their attention. Judy said that in that moment she could almost see her daughter's depression lifting, and within a few days she was able to return to school. Judy said, "my daughter was returned to health in a matter of seconds" (LaGrand, 1999, p. 142).

Types of ADC events

Deceased-initiated contact can be mediated through the physical senses, dreams, telepathy, the manipulation of physical objects, or through natural phenomena. In this study and the literature review, **sensing the presence** of the deceased was found to be the most commonly reported type of ADC. Other types include **auditory** (hearing the actual voice of the deceased); **telepathy** (hearing the words of the deceased), **touch** (perception of being touched by the deceased); **visual**; **olfactory** (personal scent of the deceased or their favorite cologne, flowers, or food); **vivid dreams**; **out-of-body** (leaving the body and visiting the deceased); **telephone calls** (the phone rings, and if answered, the deceased gives a short message); **precognitive** (a dream or waking experience of the deceased before knowing the individual has died); **psi kappa** (objects are moved from one place to another) events; and **natural phenomena** (e.g., butterflies, rainbows, hummingbirds, and inanimate objects such as coins, feathers, or pictures that hold special

meaning to the deceased or the bereaved. The sense of *taste* in ADC is rarely reported. Three other specific subcategories ADCs were reported in this study: the of the types listed above with the exception of *taste*, which is rarely reported.

In addition to the 13 types of ADC listed in the introduction, participants in this study reported (1) the tangible, physical presence of the deceased as a sexual experience, (2) a mystical ADC, and (3) ADC messages delivered through radio-broadcast songs. Examples from this study are: (1) (sexual) "I was taking a shower and I felt George's presence. He wanted to make love. I got out of the shower and dried myself off. I sat down on the bed and I could feel him as if he was there. I had an orgasm without touching myself." (2) (mystical) "Buddha was there, Jesus was there, Mary was there...it was like all of us were in a group hug and were all kind of - at one. I felt my chest open, my heart open and in the air above me, a huge, vague form of divine presences was holding Jim who was holding me. I felt that I had been with God, and God was with Jim. A resonant voice from the surrounding spirits told us we were loved, and that we were released. (3) (radio station messages) "I can turn on the radio station and hear a song that she loved; and...the minute I said my Dad loved baseball, his favorite song came on the radio by Connie Francis..."

Some contact experiences are evidential or veridical (verifiable) because they reveal specific information, unknown to percipients prior to their ADCs, but later found to be true. Charlotte had a precognitive ADC of her Father who was missing: "I had the sense of him walking up our driveway about a week after he died and talking to him...I asked her how that experience helped her with her grief. She said: "I relaxed a bit about not knowing where his body was. And it wasn't long after that that some boys were hiking and found his body in the woods."

(2) Shared ADC experiences are rare; in this study, Sally and Carolyn experienced the same ADC along with at least a dozen family members and friends:

(Carolyn's perspective)

"I took it [the Kwan Yin statue] with me to the ceremony to just be with Mom while they were cremating her body. I placed it on the altar. About a half hour after we started (we were singing and chanting and praying and sharing) I saw the statue drip. Sally was also noticing that it was dripping. It kept forming beads of water...drip...drip...drip! I thought, 'That just can't be water dripping!' We tried to determine what was going on. It dripped the whole rest of the time that we were there, probably an hour or two. Every body observed it. I thought it would stop as soon as I moved it, but it started dripping faster! The statue continued to drip for a week after I brought it home! I was telling the kids, "OK, this is a miracle - you guys have to see this!" It was some sort of mystical communication from her letting us know that she had made it [to the other side]."

(Sally's perspective)

"Carolyn had brought the statue that was Marilyn's to the ceremony. It was sitting in the center of the room with no electrical connection. I was focused on it and very interested in what was going on. It was dripping water. It was then that I immediately knew that it was Marilyn, communicating....It was a phenomenon.... At first, while I was looking at it I thought maybe it was dripping oil and that oil had been poured in the top and was coming out. We were all in shock as we watched it....It was like the Mary statues that cry. We were all staring and transfixed.... Kwan Yin is standing on a dragon and the dragon has its mouth open. At the bottom of the statue there is a very small receptacle where it can hold the water. The water dripped out of the vase in her hand into the mouth of the dragon. It filled up the bottom of the statue. Carolyn collected the water in a jar and anointed friends and family with it."

Beneficial Aspects of ADC

Published therapeutic benefits of ADC are:

- To provide **comfort** and reassurance that **love continues on after death**
- To **assist the death transition**: deceased loved ones return to help the dying
- To give advice and solve problems
- To protect by giving **warnings** of impending accidents to be avoided
- To show **meaning** in life and death
- To confirm **hope** that there is life after death
- To provide a new sense of **life purpose** for the mourner
- To establish a new relationship with the deceased by completing unfinished business. ADC can **reduce the anger, guilt, anxiety, and depression** associated with the death of a loved one, thereby assisting the survivor to move forward
- To demonstrate that the loved one **has not abandoned** the survivor
- To provide information not previously known but needed by the bereaved

Devers (1987, 1994) was inspired by her sister's ADC experience following the death of their mother, to write her master's thesis, doctoral dissertation, and a book, *Goodbye Again* (1996) on the subject of ADC. Her sister, described as scientifically educated and skeptical, saw and heard their mother, and said it was a turning point in her life. Devers says, "My sister's experience instantly shifted her worldview or paradigm. This sudden shift had a healing quality because it created a sense of awe, wonder, and hope. It also gave her a mental resiliency that had not previously existed" (1996, p. 8). The trigger or cue for the shift was something that allowed her sister to know, without doubt, that it her mother was communicating with her.

Possible Origins of ADC

A consensus can be inferred among Klimo (1998), Radin (1997), and Targ & Katra (1998): their writings basically agree that there are three possibilities for the source of the information: (1) the mind of the bereaved individual to which a medium may either consciously or unconsciously be telepathically attuned; (2) the actual, real-time telepathic communications of the deceased individual (ergo, consciousness survives death); or (3) from Universal Mind or Akashic Records, said to be the "cosmic memory bank" (Klimo, 1998, p. 435) which contains all events past, present, and future. Another way of stating the third possibility in terms of quantum mechanics (Bohm, 1980) is that an ADC is a specific imprint of non-local information that exists everywhere all the time, and via an unknown process, becomes available to the percipient.

ADC as Anomalous Experience

ADC is a form of anomalous psi experience. Cardena, Lynn, and Krippner (2000) define anomalous experience as "...an uncommon experience... or one that, although it may be experienced by a substantial amount of the population (e.g., experiences interpreted as telepathic), is believed to deviate from ordinary experience or from the usually accepted explanations of reality" (p. 4). Bem and Honorton (1994) suggest: "psi is a hypothetical construct relating to the presumed anomalous transfer of information or energy for which there is, arguably, objective evidential support" (p. 53).

The exact nature of psi phenomena is unknown (Krippner, 1995), but psi events are usually grouped under headings: (1) **psi gamma** (extrasensory perception or ESP) e.g., information obtained in non-ordinary ways, such as telepathy, clairvoyance, post-cognition, and precognition. This is receptive psi in which anomalous information flow is reported; (2) **psi kappa** (psychokinesis) where an organism seems to influence living, static or moving systems from a distance, e.g., objects or organisms are moved from one location to another; and (3) **psi theta**: e.g., past life reports, mediumship, near death and out-of-body experiences, ADC, and voices manifested on electronic devices.

A Recent Upsurge in ADC Awareness in the American Public

A 1991 public opinion poll revealed that nearly half of all Americans felt they had, at some time in their lives, been in the presence of a deceased friend or relative (National Opinion Research Center, 1991). Ten years later there is a groundswell of interest and awareness on the part of the American public regarding ADC, and more people are willing to talk about their experiences without fear of pejorative comments from others regarding their state of mental health. The movie industry is often said to reflect the "pulse" of American society, and in the last five years (1997-2002) there has been a resurgence ADC-related plots in movies (e.g. "Dragonfly", 2002 and "The Sixth Sense", 1999) and documentaries, (e.g., *Life Afterlife* [sic], (1999), which featured Larry Dossey (1993), Judy Guggenheim (1995), Elisabeth Kubler-Ross (1969), Dean Radin (1997), Charles Tart (1986), and Gary Schwartz (1999). John Edward, a medium featured in *Life Afterlife* [sic] (1999), and in Schwartz' (1999) study of the effect of mediumship on bereavement, now has his own daily primetime show, "Crossing Over". Other recent movies with the ADC/survival of consciousness theme include: "Defending Your Life" (1992), "Ghost" (1994), "Sleepless in Seattle" (1993), "Field of Dreams" (1994), "Always" (1994), "What Dreams May Come" (1998), "Meet Joe Black" (1998), and "City of Angels" (1999). In all of these the characters involved are searching for deeper spiritual meaning in life. They all discover that consciousness survives death and that the dead assist the living. While these movies cannot be used in research as an accurate indicator about the current belief structure of any part of American society, a common-sense glance at the number of them and the corresponding box office receipts indicates that many Americans are openly curious.

Methodology

Potential participants (referred to in phenomenology as co-researchers) responded to notices in the San Diego Holistic Nurses' Newsletter, an announcement I made at the 1999 Noetic Sciences Conference, and the Guggenheim website www.after-death.com, asking for bereaved individuals to participate in ADC research. Seven people were selected for interview from 18 completed questionnaires. The criteria for interview selection were that percipients felt that: (1) their ADCs reduced their grief; (2) in the hours or days after their ADCs their grief was less intense because of the experience(s); (3) their ADCs were life-changing in some way; and (4) they were willing to participate in a tape-recorded interview with the researcher. Interviews were semi-structured, transcribed verbatim, and then analyzed using phenomenological reduction methods to extract the essential constituents of the ADC experiences, and the meaning ascribed to these events by the participants. Participants reviewed the transcriptions for accuracy and added anything previously overlooked. The transcriptions were then analyzed to elucidate the most salient comments about the lived experience of ADC (meaning units). After removing the repeating and overlapping information contained in the meaning units of the seven interviews; the resulting invariant constituents of the described experiences were then clustered into eight emergent themes common to all participants.

Findings

Participants said they felt blessed and privileged to experience ADCs, even if initially frightened or saddened by the initial contact. All were able to begin to grieve, continue grieving with a sense of completion of unfinished business, or complete grieving because of their ADCs, depending upon where they were in the grieving process at the time of interview. To varying degrees, they reported an expanded awareness of the meaning of life and death, feared death less, felt confirmed in who they believe themselves to be, and had a new understanding of themselves in relation to a bigger picture or universal grand plan. All said they had a "knowing" that consciousness and love survive death and look forward to reunion with loved ones. Of the 40 reported ADCs, only one resulted in a complete release of grief for its percipient. The other 39 events resulted in varying degrees of spontaneous healing or resolution of grief. All ADCs were described as ultimately beneficial even if initially frightening.

The eight emergent themes common to the participants are: (1) *Spontaneity*: unexpectedness of ADC establishes authenticity for bereaved individual; (2) *cues for recognition* are specific to the deceased and reinforce authenticity; (3) *bereaved considers self-delusion* before accepting the experience; (4) after ADC, bereaved reports *immediate relief*, comfort, hope, love, emotional stabilization, encouragement, forgiveness, and the joy of continuing relationship; (5) ADC assists bereaved in *completing unfinished business with deceased*; (6) *bereaved reframes relationship with the deceased* as a result of ADC; (7) *bereaved reframes relationship with self*, and (8) *bereaved may reframe relationship with God or the divine*. A few examples, as direct quotations, are:

1. Spontaneity

- I wasn't even thinking about him. I wasn't thinking about him right then, but all of a sudden I felt his arms come around my shoulders....He was there! (Sally)
- All of a sudden, in the context of something else, I could feel his presence.... I knew he was around. (Charlotte)
- It's not like I have been seeking him, necessarily.... (Penny)

2. Cues for Recognition of the Deceased

Degree of Presence: Based on the analysis of the transcribed interviews I created a numeric scale to indicate the intensity of physical presence experienced by the co-researchers. I did this because "sensing presence" was not specific enough to describe what these co-researchers experienced. Some felt presence without touch. Some felt touched, and one felt touched in a sexual manner.

- 1= presence without any other senses involved
- 2= deceased is seen, heard, and/or smelled
- 3= deceased moves objects
- 4= percipient feels touched by deceased
- 5= sexual climax with deceased

#1: I knew the difference between when he was there and when he wasn't there...there was definitely an arrival and a departure. (Mary)

#2 and #4: In my dream he is sitting on the bed.... We hug. I can smell him; hear his voice - so real! I saw him; I felt him; I heard him speaking to me... (Charlotte)

#2 and #3: On the third day it happened again as I was dozing off. I heard my name. This time I sat up as my mother's photograph fell off the wall. The glass didn't break. (Tom)

#4: I just felt him there. I felt his arms around me - I felt he was there. (Charlotte)

#5: I had an experience that was unusual and private. I was taking a shower and I felt Gary's presence. He wanted to make love. I got out of the shower and dried myself off. I sat down on the bed and I could feel him as if he was there. I had an orgasm without touching myself. (Sally)

Familiar Behaviors or Words

- I knew it was him because he called me by my given name and everybody else calls me Penny.
- And I knew that this was my mother because nobody knows how my Mother disciplined me but me. (Tom)
- I knew it was him because some time in the dream he would wink at me. (Mary)
- That's what he would have done when he was alive. (Sally)

Psi Kappa Events

- Telephone: At 2 am the phone rang. I picked it up and said "hello" and there was a long silence. Then my Mother's voice said "I love you." (Victoria)
- I woke up to a crash in Derek's room....On the floor is a broken picture which was a collage of all the pictures of Derek and Rick together. It had been hanging over Derek's bed. It flew over Derek's bed into the middle of the floor and the glass broke. (Victoria)
- The Dripping Kwan Yin Statue (*from Carolyn's perspective*): I saw the statue drip...Every body that was there observed it...
- The Dripping Kwan Yin Statue [*from Sally's perspective*]: Carolyn had brought the statue that was Marilyn's to the ceremony. It was sitting in the center of the room with no electrical connection. It was dripping water...I immediately knew that it was Marilyn communicating....It was a phenomenon.
- Computer: The day after Mom [Marilyn] died, the date everywhere on her computer was reading 1956, the year I was born. Further confirmation about this being a message from Mom came later that day when Gina left a group message at 10:52 pm, the exact time of day I was born. I went online to check Mom's website after not looking at it for a while, I was visitor #1956. I hadn't been there for months, and the site had been up for three years! (Carolyn)

3. Am I Crazy, Self-Deluding or Hallucinating?

- I felt shocked! Surprised! Did I imagine that? After having a number of experiences feeling Gary's presence, I began to think I might be crazy. (Sally)
- I wonder if I made it up? No, I heard the words! I was there! (Charlotte)
- I began to wonder if I was making this up to make myself feel better....(Charlotte)

4. Immediate Benefits of ADC

Confirmation and Reassurance that Love Remains

- I was wondering if my father would be proud of [my accomplishment in becoming ordained], when...I could see him right in front of me; and he didn't say a word but there were tears running down his face and I could just feel the pride and love emanating from him. (Penny)
- There was a lot of reassurance. (Victoria)
- I left without the guilt I had brought in...I don't remember ever being as happy as I was when I got back home that night [after seeing and talking with my mother]. (Tom)

Comfort and Hope

- The feeling that there is still a spirit or soul connection with her is comforting. (Carolyn)
- He would be there for me whenever I need him. I felt a lot of comfort. (Victoria)
- It was such a comfort. It was such a gift. And I had such a sense of peace....(Penny)
- She understands that I couldn't be with her [when she died] and it's OK. It gave me comfort. (Victoria)
- Mostly comforting....(Mary)
- I felt a lot of hope after that. It uplifted me or gave me a boost.. .where in the beginning it probably just kept me alive. (Mary)

Warnings

- I thought the crashing things were because he was jealous. Now I see that these particular crashings are warnings. A little vase that was sitting on the

back top of the toilet, it the middle of it, had flown off the toilet and crashed onto the floor...I realized three months later that the crashing vase meant that I shouldn't go. (Victoria)

5. Forgiveness and/or Completion of Unfinished Business

NOTE: Forgiveness is critical for some individuals in order to complete unfinished business; yet it is not an issue for others and they work through their grieving process anyway. While most of the co-researchers (Carolyn, Penny, Tom, Victoria, Charlotte) experienced forgiveness as a mutual exchange with their deceased loved ones, and forgiveness catalyzed their grieving process; Sally really did not seem to go through a forgiveness phase in order to work through her grief. Mary also did not focus on forgiveness as a factor in her grieving process.

- I looked at him and I said 'Daddy, you will never forgive me, will you?' He had such love and compassion in his voice... and he said, 'no, that's not it. You won't forgive yourself,' and I could finally start to forgive myself for the fact that we hadn't had a perfect relationship. (Penny)
- We had a lot of forgiveness dialogue talk back and forth.... (Charlotte)
- We [my grandfather and I] forgave each other. (Tom)
- Clearly I heard her say, 'there is nothing to be sorry for; nothing to be mad about; our love for each other is way beyond that.' She really emphasized that I should not feel guilt. (Tom)
- Mom just called on the phone! She said she loved me! She understands that I couldn't be with her [when she died] and it's OK. (Victoria)

6. Bereaved Reframes Relationship with the Deceased

- In many ways we have a more real relationship now than when he was alive - without all the mental illness in the way. (Penny)
- (The dripping statue) helped me to feel that she was still connected, and that maybe she didn't really abandon me; although on one level it did still feel that way. But on another level, those communications really helped me feel a stronger connection, and trust that it was real. (Carolyn)
- She wasn't suffering any more. She was extremely happy and that made me happy. She can really hear me. When I looked at my parents' pictures I looked at them from a completely different perspective [death is not the end]. (Tom)

7. Bereaved Reframes Relationship with Self

- I was given a wonderful gift in his presence to have him walk with me through this period of time, and yet, it wasn't the way I wanted it to be. I was having to recalibrate everything I thought. It changed the focus of my life from being a person who wanted to be loved, to wanting to be love in the world. I was learning how to communicate and listen and be with myself in ways that I had never done before. Having him around gave me hope that I could live, and willingness to. (Mary)
- I closed the door on guilt and began my own healing process. (Tom)
- When I tried telling people what I experienced, some responded graciously; some people give you a LOOK....I don't give a damn what they think! It [ADC] gave me the courage to think, after this, what could be impossible? I was given another level of -- I don't know what to call it -- intelligence, awareness, pushing the envelope further. (Tom)
- I would never take anything back. I have no regrets. Sure I went through the healing process which was all regrets and anger, but I wouldn't be who I am today if all this had not happened. (Victoria)

8. Bereaved Reframes Relationship with Death and a Larger Reality

- It gave me a better understanding of death. (Tom)
- All of these experiences confirm that this really was the path that God meant for me in the first place. My husband was supposed to die because I was supposed to become the person that I am, and learn how to be and speak my truth....(Victoria)
- I know now that there's a much larger field around me that is going to show me which way to go and which way to do things. Before, I mostly used my rational mind to do that. (Charlotte)
- ...Having a belief system is one thing; having the actual experience of something like that is another level of, for me, a place of awe; that place of realizing life is so much bigger than we imagine or experience it to be. It [ADC] gave me an opportunity to experience those realms and dimensions (possibilities that we are not attuned to or experiencing) that I believe are there. (Carolyn)
- What it did for me was make me think 'he's definitely present here, so what is going on?' It led me to an exploration of life after death. I would just say that all of this has been an affirmation that there is life after death. I believe that we just go into energy. We are a soul moving in the vehicle of a human body, and when the body falls away the soul goes on, and chooses to come back. This really is true, according to my experiences. (Sally)

After all interviews were analyzed I discovered similarities between the emerging themes common to all the participants which suggest similarities in steps in the grieving process, and the exceptional human experience (EHE) process explicated by White (1994, 1996, 1997a, 1997b) and Brown (2000).

ADCs as Exceptional Human Experiences

As a type of anomalous experience, ADC falls into a centralizing focus of study begun by Rhea A. White in 1990, that strives to understand anomalous or exceptional experiences as they contribute to human awareness. According to White's colleague, Suzanne V. Brown (2000):

Anomalous or Exceptional Experiences (EEs) have the potential to be experienced and subsequently integrated into new personal and world view contexts. At these points of catalytic transpersonal insight – where/when the event is no longer apprehended as separate from the experience of the event and the experiencer realizes that he or she is wholly integral to the creation and resolution of the EE – the experience is potentiated, transmuted and humanized, and becomes an Exceptional Human Experience (EHE). (p.69)

In other words, an EE is an event, and EHE is a longitudinal process catalyzed by the EE. White (1994) credits the writings of James with the foundational concepts about human identity that gave her a springboard for understanding the self-actualizing process initiated by an EE. James proposed that we have a fundamental uneasiness about our lives, and that we are saved from it by connecting with our higher self. James (1902) observes that a person is saved from his or her inherent unease or disease by becoming conscious of a "More" that he or she is part of; and that we can "contact the sacred right where we are in our daily lives" (p. 11).

EEs are transitional, transformative experiences that serve as a bridge between an old identity and a new one where the old one is marked by isolation and the new one by connectedness. They open the field of awareness, disrupt the cultural fabric of the experiencer, and open the door to a whole new way of perceiving physical and non-physical reality (White, 1997). As illustrations of a parallel between White's EHE process and ADC research, Whitney (1992) reported that interviewees were interactive

with their higher powers and several participants felt a stronger sense of connection and were more sure of their places in the world as a result of contact; Devers (1994) found that bereaved individuals must reconcile the extraordinary nature of their ADC experience, and if they do not accept the ADC as possible they are likely to discard the potential healing that ADC offers.

Figure 1 illustrates the similarities between the way the co-researchers in this study processed their ADCs, and White's (1994, 1996, 1997a, 1997b) EHE process. She outlines the process in five stages. I needed to split stage 2 into stages 2 and 3 in order to differentiate for purposes of data analysis, the Am-I-Hallucinating stage from the No,-I'm-Not-So-What-Is-Going-On-Here stage. The reason for this is to elucidate the turning point where some ADC percipients drop out of the process because they do not allow the experience to be real for them and are, therefore, not included in the study because participants were self-selecting. (Figure 1 is on page 84)

The six stages utilized in this study are:

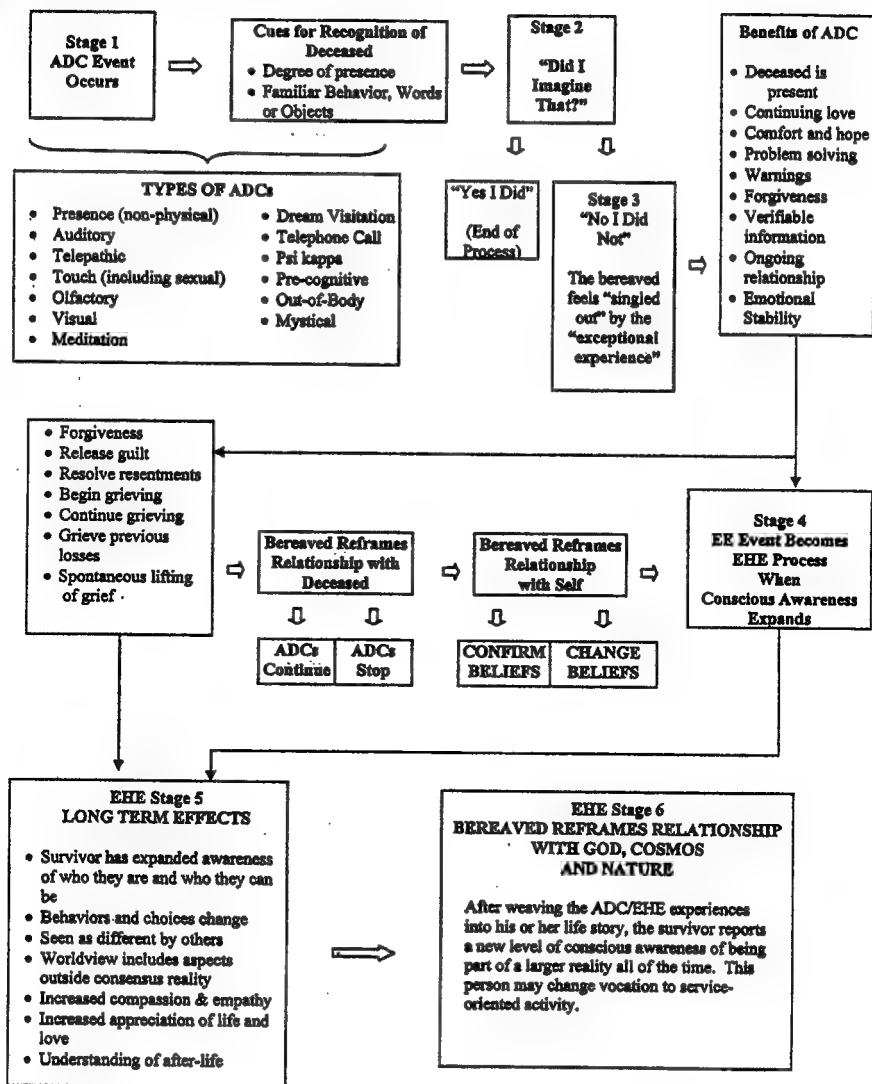
1. An "Encounter Experience," or spontaneous anomalous event, is perceived and followed by a choice point where the individual either dismisses it because it is not part of accepted reality, or chooses to potentiate the experience by going on to Step 2.
2. Experiencers may consider self-delusion or hallucination before admitting that the anomaly of personal experience (something the person has never experienced before, e.g., a personal first or personal best achievement) actually happened. They often ask themselves 'Did I imagine that?'
3. The event becomes an "Exceptional Experience" when the experiencer, after trying to explain it away rationally, admits that it actually happened, even if initially frightened.
4. An EHE process begins when the experiencer finds meaning and significance in the experience and his or her identity begins to change accordingly. The experiencer may think, act and feel differently about self and be seen as different by others. The anomalous event seems as real as any other life experience in spite of its exceptional features, even if it distances the experiencer from his or her ego-self. The person is aware of an expanded connection between self and the cosmos, and may spontaneously go in and out of this awareness while living ordinary life. LeShan (1966) calls this state of expanded awareness where all things and events are related, "the clairvoyant reality" (p. 35).
5. The experiencer feels altered in some way so that his or her attention is moved to a new angle, and anomalous events occur more frequently. The experience is on its way to becoming an exceptional human experience, because a transformation in consciousness is in process.
6. A potentially long-term EHE process that was initiated in Stage 4, has, by now altered the experiencer's belief system, thoughts, actions, worldview. Experiencers in this stage innately understand that all things are possible and that reality is self-created; and have aligned individual life purpose with a sense of universal purpose. An individual who has fully actualized the EHE can enter and leave clairvoyant reality at will.

Summary

Emotional and physiological manifestations of grief, according to Jacobs (1993), include: Emotional numbness, disbelief, longing, yearning for the lost person, pre-occupations with the deceased person, sighing, crying, dreams, illusions, hallucinations, seeking out places and things associated with the deceased person, irritability, anger, protest, sadness, depressed mood, anxiety, despair, insomnia, anorexia, fatigue, lethargy, guilt, loss of interest in usual activities, disorganization of behavior patterns that used to be related to the deceased person, restlessness, and vague somatic symptoms (p. 8).

Prigerson et al. (2001) developed the Inventory of Complicated Grief to assess impaired role performance, functional impairment, subjective sleep disturbance, low self-esteem, depression, and anxiety. Their research associated traumatic grief with a high

Figure 1: Composite structural description: co-researchers process after-death communication events like other exceptional human experiences



Exceptional Human Experiences (EHEs) are central to a field of study created by Rhea White (1990, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997)

risk of cancer, cardiac disorders, alcohol and tobacco consumption, and suicidal ideation. As a result of grief-induced stress, Parkes (1998) also holds that the bereaved are at higher risk of dying than are non-bereaved persons. The highest risk occurs in the weeks and months closest to the loss, and women are at greater risk than men (p.16). If society encouraged the ADC phenomenon, this serious risk could be significantly reduced.

The field of psychoneuroimmunology provides evidence that feelings and emotions have impact on the physical body; that physiological states can influence perception. Perception is based on frequency patterns perceived and interpreted by the brain. It is possible that while grieving produces stressful physiological states that predispose the bereaved to disease, it is also possible that those same physiological states predispose the bereaved to perceiving different frequencies of communication from deceased loved ones, and/or different avenues of healing not yet understood.

Although American society resists the existence of paranormal phenomena in general, we may be in the middle of a paradigm shift: if ADC becomes widely accepted as a normal part of grief recovery, the culture in general could develop more open and supportive ways of dealing with death, dying, and bereavement. For these reasons, further ADC/EHE research is a suggested course of future study.

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THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF PSYCHOSPIRITUAL INTEGRATION:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY WITH EXEMPLARY PSYCHOTHERAPISTS WHO
ACTIVELY INTEGRATE SPIRITUALITY INTO THEIR PRACTICE OF
PSYCHOTHERAPY

Frank E. White, Ph.D.

The goal of this study was to obtain a deep and robust description of the phenomenon of psychospiritual integration (PSI). The analysis of the data from interviews with 12 exemplary therapists conceptualized PSI as having 4 core themes: (a) Universality and Transparency—spiritual events becoming integrated into one's life and mental-egoic structures evolve towards the transegoic and universal; (b) Spirituality is the Basis of Everything—the teleological basis on which PSI is founded; (c) Receptivity to That Which is Greater Than the Self—engagement with the sacred including acts of surrender and openness; (d) Mystery and the Tolerance for the Unknown—the motivation and perpetuation of PSI.

Introduction

Over the last 20 years, national surveys published in mainstream professional journals of mental health report a resurgence of interest in spirituality throughout this country. The revitalization of religious and spiritual elements in psychotherapy marks the ending of the "alienation that has existed between the mental health professions and religion for most of the 20th century," according to Richards and Bergin, (2000, p.3). The implicit challenge for mental health practitioners is how to ethically and competently address the diverse spiritual needs of their clients. A review of a wide range of surveys and studies reveals three consistent observations: First, religious and spiritual practices and beliefs of both the client and the therapists are important factors in psychotherapy. Second, there is a lack of training in religious and spiritual matters in the curriculum of most institutions offering advanced degrees in psychology (Shafranske & Malony, 1990). Third, qualitative research specific to the psychotherapists' spirituality is under-examined. Empirical studies concerning concrete and personal experiences of therapists and counselors lack detailed investigation. In response to these observations, this study looked at the phenomenon of psychospiritual integration (PSI) as a lived-experience, not *how* spirituality was included in a clinical setting, but the deeply personal sense-of-being—the core sense of spiritual integration. This study was initially guided by a definition of PSI as the "integration of one's psychological makeup with the experience of the sacred into a sense of one's way-of-being." This definition will be expanded throughout the course of this paper.

A brief history of the mental health profession over the last 100 years, reveals that mainstream psychology and psychotherapy as professional entities, attempted to distinguish themselves from religious and spiritual matters through "scientific" research and procedures. Some historians suggest that, as the medical model for the treatment of mental health evolved during the late 1800s and the early 20th century, it crafted its credibility as a scientific endeavor, cleaved from the unscientific and speculative field of

philosophy (Shafranske & Gorsuch, 1984). This attempt to separate religion and spirituality from psychology based on empirical and quantitative data was further complicated by the lack of differentiation between the terms spirituality and religion or religiosity for most of the century. For example, William James, in 1902, defined religion as the "feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, as far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine" (1902/1961, p. 42). This definition is very similar to Frances Vaughan's more recent definition of spirituality as a "subjective experience of the sacred" (1991, p. 105).

This study also found that the charter terms of this study, *spirituality* and *psychotherapy*, along with *religion* and *psychology*, were found to be laden with complex emotional, and cultural connotations making it difficult to draw comparisons and distinctions from the existing body of research. The current meaning and connotations of these key terms have evolved along with, and reflect changes in, social consciousness and cultural values. In this study, it was necessary to distinguish between the definition of religion and spirituality as several of the participants felt that their early religious experiences were often restrictive and harmful, wherein their personal experience of "Spirit," "God," "Creator," "Life Force," and "One" provide the meaningful basis of all they do and who they are. In addition, the distinction between religion and spirituality was identified by several recent studies concluding that spirituality has a greater universality than do religious beliefs, and that a "significant group of people in the United States . . . disavow religious affiliations, but consider themselves spiritual (Hill, 2000, p. 140, citing studies by Roof, 1993). However, it is also noted that "one can be spiritual without necessarily being religious . . . [and] a person may be religiously involved without being spiritual" (Payne et al, 1992, p. 172).

The increased use of the term spirituality, representing a belief system separate from religiousness, prompted the California State Psychological Association (CSPA) Task Force on Spirituality and Psychotherapy to convene a special meeting in 1984. Its purpose was to create a definition of spirituality that would reflect the attitude of psychologists concerning spirituality and their training in handling spiritual matters. The task force agreed that "spirituality referred to a unique, personally meaningful experience which although positively related to specific forms of religiosity was not reliant upon any given form or appearance" (Shafranske & Gorsuch, 1984, p. 233). Since that report, most psychological literature has defined religion and religiosity as the formalized procedures or ritualized behaviors enacted to create and maintain a spiritual experience. In short, in this paper, religion is defined as, "subscribing to a set of beliefs or doctrines that are institutionalized," contrasted with spirituality that is a "subjective experience of the sacred" (Vaughan, 1991, p. 105).

The distinction between the terms religion and spirituality has made it possible to look at the values, training, and types of interventions utilized by various approaches to psychotherapy. For example, in a study by Hutton in 1994, the types of therapeutic interventions, the content and focus of psychotherapy, the values and expectations of three therapeutic approaches were assessed. The psychoanalytic and behavioral/cognitive therapists reported having received little or no training in spiritual matters and held low expectations of encountering them in a clinical setting. In contrast, transpersonal therapists were found to have more training, interest, and experience in spiritual matters; and, encountered a high volume of spiritual matters in the clinical setting. A positive correlation was drawn between training in spiritual matters, the expectations within the clinical setting and the occurrence of spiritual matters in a therapeutic setting. In addition, recent trends in qualitative research, especially as seen in transpersonal psychology,

indicate an interest in exploring the unique personal attributes of therapists who include a spiritual component in their clinical practice in an attempt to more fully meet the experience and needs of their clients. Such studies increase the basis of knowledge from which to draw perspectives and values useful in the training and education of mental health workers. With these factors in mind, this study was designed to explore and define the phenomenon of PSI—that is, “What is the experience of psychospiritual integration?”

Method of Inquiry

The method of inquiry was a qualitative analysis of data obtained from a semi-structured interview with each of the 12 research participants. The semi-structured interview was selected as the most appropriate instrument to achieve the goals of this study—to acquire a deep, full, robust, and thick descriptions of the PSI phenomenon—descriptions that clearly and accurately portray the structures of consciousness that constitute this experience (Polkinghorne, 1989).

Selection of Participants

The selection of participants was guided by the wisdom of William James who wrote, “To learn the secrets of any science, we go to expert specialists . . . We combine what they tell us with the rest of our wisdom, and form our final judgment independently” (2002, p. 528); and, Abraham Maslow who, during his initial inquiry into “self-actualized” people, suggested that if one wants to study exemplary qualities of thought and action, one should engage those who live these qualities. Therefore, participants for this study were sought from among psychotherapists identified as exemplars by their colleagues. Twelve licensed psychotherapists at the master’s or doctoral level, over the age of 49, with a minimum of 15 years experience, who integrate spirituality into their clinical practice, were included in this study. Each participant committed to a single interview of about two hours, a review of their interview transcription for accuracy and corrections, and respond to a process of validation of the interpretation of their interview and resulting comments.

Core Themes

Through an extensive process of multiple readings of each interview, core themes and meaningful identifiers of the PSI phenomenon were identified. A summary of each core theme is listed below.

Core Theme 1: Universality and Transparency

This core theme expresses the dynamic nature of spiritual experiences inherent in the phenomenon of PSI. In this case, universality refers to the experience of a personal and discrete spiritual event opening into, or leading an individual to, a sense of universality or unity consciousness. Transparency refers to the tendency of profound mystical experiences to become integrated into one’s sense of being or one’s personality over time, or becoming subtle or indistinguishable characteristics, in other words, evolving into transparency. Participants described these extraordinary experiences as *powerful*, *dramatic*, and *transforming*. Often the initial impact was dramatic, disruptive, or disorienting. Characteristically, these events shifted the sense of self, from a separate and individual ego-self to a sense of universality. Discrete, imposing, and personal experiences evolved into a sense of connection with a larger reality—a universal consciousness.

Several participants also identified universality and transparency as the long term effect of a spiritual practice that permeates everything one does, prompting the remark, "Everything in life is that experience." Participants also reported that they were once able to separate spirituality and psychotherapy but can no longer do so.

Participants also referred to the experience of universality as a specific type of consciousness: "being one with everything," "unity consciousness," "tribal consciousness," and "non-separation. This sense of universality was inspired by esoteric mystical experiences and maintained through on-going spiritual practices and culturally related affiliations.

Two participants identified profound grief and loss as a source of universal consciousness. They asserted that under certain conditions personal loss could evolve into the perception of universal loss. One participant recalled the death of his mother as a "psychological grieving [of a personal sort, but also containing] a sense of depth to it as a human experience that goes beyond me . . . It was mine but beyond me."

In brief, this core theme identifies the dynamic and evolutionary qualities of PSI. It accounts for the integration of discrete mystical experiences into the fabric of one's being. Profound experiences alter one's sense of reality, often transcending the ego—shifting from a separate ego-self to a universal consciousness.

Core Theme 2: Everything Has A Spiritual Basis

This core theme establishes the rationale behind PSI. It identifies the reasoning which underlies the participants' decisions to engage in spiritual practices and to define extraordinary experiences as spiritual. It also provides an explanation for the existence of spiritual emergence.

Judging from the general descriptions of mystical experiences, styles of psychotherapy, and types of on-going studies and seminars, the participants in this study believe that life has ultimate meaning and purpose—that is, everything has a spiritual basis. The notion of ubiquitous spirituality reveals a belief that something beyond human capacities informs and interacts with all forms of life. This something is referred to as "Universal Intelligence," "Being of Light," "Life Force," "Universal Consciousness," "God," "that which is greater than the self," and the "spirits of all things." Within this perspective of ubiquitous spirituality, there is no direct reference to a specific religious affiliation. This core theme is further supported by the recognition and assertion by many participants that they would find it difficult or impossible to practice psychotherapy without spirituality.

Core Theme 3: Receptivity to That Which is Greater Than the Self.

This core theme exposes two primary aspects of PSI: *receptivity* and *surrender*. Five of the 12 participants specifically employed the words *surrender* and *surrendering* in their description of the PSI phenomenon. Surrender, as it is employed in this case, is both a letting go of something and being receptive or available to something else. According to 4 participants, this is an act of "letting go of the ego," or "getting the ego out of the way." Receptivity is also referred to as being *open* and trusting in the process at hand and non-attachment to a specific outcome, action, or intervention.

The act of being receptive can be viewed from several angles. Three participants reported the phenomenon of *hitting-the-wall* or *bottoming-out*—the recognition that their level of knowledge, acquired ability, and training could not meet their existential

demands. Consequently, each in her or his own way surrendered to a *power* greater than the self. It meant an intentional openness or receptivity to God or Being of Light. This also meant a willingness to receive from, or openness to something beyond the self, in this case God or the Being of Light.

It is also the act of being receptive to a spiritual presence that occurs while working with clients. In the act of being receptive, the therapist includes her "whole body and not just the cerebral cortex." When she feels connected and all the channels are open . . . [she feels that she can] really listen to what people are sharing with [her]." In order to be "really open" she must also be "empty." This attitude of receptivity was explained by 8 of the participants as *channeling* a spiritual presence or being a *conduit*.

The experience of PSI was defined as being receptive and surrendering to *something* [in this case a spiritual force or entity] greater than one's ego. It is the act of putting aside or suspending a certain belief or system of beliefs in order to receive insights or information. It is also receptivity or willingness to be influenced by something beyond one's rational, scientific mind. Quoting from the interviews, this something can be experienced as an inner guidance, or "Life Force coming through me," "grace," or a "gift from God." It is also understood as an intuitive insight, and a felt-sense of knowing. One person described it as being driven less by his personal *psychological dynamics* and more by *spiritual dynamics*—a less ego-driven consciousness.

Core Theme 4: Mystery and the Tolerance for the Unknown

Mystery emerged as a core theme due partially to its ubiquitous nature. In a global sense, mystery is found in the unknown future, the unrealized present, and the forgotten past. In a more specific sense, mystery and the tolerance for the unknown identify a subtle characteristic of PSI—the role of mystery or the unknown in a therapeutic setting. "I walk with somebody for a while. I often don't know where we're going, and I don't necessarily know when we get there . . . I'm comfortable with ambiguity . . . that's part of the process." It is to be present with a client not only to be open, but also to be in that "I don't know place." And, it is, "some kind of relationship [with spirit] . . . that feels like mystery to me. That at times that presence is there and at other times when I . . . expect it to be [there] it isn't." For one participant, it is a kundalini experience that reminds her, "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in my philosophy . . . something mysterious and bigger than me and beyond me that is part of me, everyone, and everything." Even the concept of non-attachment—a practice of letting go of the desires for certain outcomes, trusting in the process with its yet unknown results—contributes to the definition of mystery.

Validation of the Core Themes

In an attempt to determine the accuracy and veracity of the core themes and the meaningful identifiers, a *sympathetic resonance* (Braud & Anderson, 1998) scale was used. Each participant was provided a packet containing a letter explaining the request for feedback, a resonance reporting form, and a description of each core theme. The participants were asked to read the descriptions of the core themes and indicate the degree of resonance for each theme compared to their experience of PSI. The resonance scale consisted of four continuums listing each core theme separately. The level of resonance ranged from 10 (the highest or "highly" to 1 (least or "not at all.") Each participant responded to this request for validation and resonance.

The resonance rating for each core theme is as follows:
Core Theme 1: Universality and Transparency: 9.3; Core Theme 2: Everything Has a Spiritual Basis: 8.58; Core Theme 3: Receptivity to That Which is Greater Than the Self: 9.7; Core Theme 4: Mystery and Tolerance for the Unknown: 9.5.

Composite Definition of the Phenomenon of Psychospiritual Integration

The following is a composite definition of psychospiritual integration (PSI) taken from the most salient aspects of the participants' descriptions of their lived-experience of PSI. Participants describe PSI as being receptive to a force greater than the self, utilizing all that one is in the healing process, a way-of-being wherein spirituality is not separable from psychotherapy. It is experienced as the disappearance of the boundaries separating one person from another and a sense of unity beyond the individual ego. This deep interconnectedness between a person and all humankind can be brought about by deep loss and grief. Profound spiritual experiences may be sudden or the result of deliberate study and practice. PSI is explained as being empty and non-attached to a given therapeutic outcome. It is the feeling of non-separation from Universal Energy and an integration of all the parts of the self emotionally, psychically, and physically. PSI is also experienced as a felt-sense of knowing—an intuition, an inner voice received with gratitude and humility. It includes, and is energized by, mystery—the sense of the unfolding dynamics of personal development, the source of creativity, engagement, awe, wonder, and self-reflection.

Discussion

Universality and Transparency

Core theme 1: Universality and Transparency, identifies the transegoic and transpersonal nature of PSI—the experience of moving beyond the ego or self-structure of consciousness and engaging unity consciousness. This core theme identifies the tendency of spiritual experiences to become integrated and transparent over time. It is also the recognition that spirituality is immanent, transcendent, and universal. It is important to note that none of the participants had any formal training in dealing with spiritual matters, nor methods for including of a spiritual component in their clinical practice. For the most part, spiritual and religious matters were omitted from the curriculum and discouraged in clinical practicum.

Ten of the 12 participants account for the integration of spirituality into their clinical practice and personal psychology as the direct result of mystical or spiritual events, either before becoming a therapist or afterwards. In either case, these discrete spiritual events changed or reinforced the participants' concept and experience of reality—a reality in which spirituality becomes increasingly more prominent.

These experiences are described as a shift in consciousness from the individual sense of self—the ego-self—towards a sense of the universal; from rigid ego-structures to permeable ego-structures; from a sense of a separate sense of self to non-separation between self, others, and the Divine; and a feeling of being one with everything. The increased frequency of mystical experiences and overall spiritual awareness reported by the participants suggests an evolution of consciousness from an insular sense of identity (ego structure), to a more universal identity or consciousness that was experienced and described as one's way-of-being.

Participants also reported that some mystical experiences resulted from specific attempts to engage more fully with the Divine through prayer, meditation, and participation in various consciousness-raising workshops. On other occasions, mystical experiences were unexpected and unplanned. Often these episodes were accompanied by a significant physical component ranging from being painful, disorienting, terrifying, and bewildering, to being blissful, joyous, and fulfilling.

Besides the episodes of disruptive and unusual spiritual emergence, the participants reported a gradual awakening into a sense of unity consciousness and ego-transcendence—shifts in consciousness revealing Divine Will—as a result of deliberate study, meditation, prayer, and formal worship. The long-term effects of a spiritual practice were noted as permeating every aspect of their lives

The concept of non-separation, or unity consciousness, is consistent with Gebser's (1985) principles of *transparency* and *diaphaneity*, the result of spirituality asserting itself into consciousness. It is the process of *thinning* the structures of consciousness that inhibits spiritual emergence. The core theme, Universality and Transparency, reifies this concept through the experience of ego transcendence and unity consciousness.

The composite characterization of this core theme also compares favorably with Groff's (1988) definition of *transpersonal* experiences, characterized as the "subject's feeling that his or her consciousness expanded beyond the usual ego boundaries and has transcended the limitations of time and space" (p. 38).

In summary, the core theme, Universality and Transparency, identifies an underlying dynamic of PSI as the integration of discrete esoteric spiritual experiences and on-going spiritual pursuits into one's sense-of-self, resulting in an expansion or extension of the sense of self or ego-consciousness to a universal consciousness. The structures of consciousness that inhibit the experience of spirituality are thinned by single and multiple mystical or spiritual experiences and are the result of long-term devotional practices. Spiritual experiences alter the sense of reality, often resulting in an increased sensitivity, anticipation, and pursuits of spiritual contact—a greater receptivity to the Divine.

Everything Has a Spiritual Basis

This core theme reveals the teleological basis of PSI. It asserts that participants include spirituality in their clinical practice because, at some level of awareness, they believe that life has meaning and purpose—that everything has a spiritual basis. This theme posits that spirituality is ubiquitous and available to human experience, and that spirituality is immanent, transcendent, and universal.

The participants reported that, as novice therapists, they were required to create an artificial separation of spirituality from their clinical practice. However, its recrudescence could not be denied, as participants, through experience and maturation, integrated personal beliefs into their particular sense of self—their way-of-being a therapist.

Several participants rediscovered the persistent and ubiquitous nature of spirituality through deep stress or, "hitting-the-wall." In this example, 3 participants had highly negative experience with religion in their youth. Consequently, they avoided religion, religious affiliation and suppressed their spirituality during adolescence and young adulthood. They rediscovered their personal spiritual nature through profound loss and existential crisis. These pivotal events exposed a spiritual basis that had been obfuscated

by other attempts to understand and explain their lives, personal dynamics, and the source of a meaningful existence.

According to the participants' accounts, some pivotal moments arose unexpectedly while other experiences reflected an incremental process accomplished by multiple exposures over time. This is consistent with participant's experience that the spiritual presence, "begins to permeate my work even though I'm not conscious of it." Data from this study suggests that the concept of ubiquitous spirituality is accepted as a truism by most of the participants, judging by the high resonance response of 8.5 on a 10-point scale; yet, the presence of spirit may not be realized on all levels of awareness all the time. As Welwood (1997) suggests, we are conditioned and operate from our "habitual identifications" (p. 115) with their cognitive and task-oriented structures.

The recurring episodes of unity consciousness and ego transcendence allude to a type of consciousness not dominated by the dualistic nature of mental consciousness. Rather, it is a shift in consciousness from separate insular ego-consciousness to a transegoic and universal consciousness that lies at the heart of the PSI phenomenon.

Receptivity to That Which is Greater Than the Self

This core theme succinctly describes the most common experience of the PSI phenomenon. It also speaks to the methods through which PSI is experienced, enhanced and perpetuated in both the clinical and extraclinical setting. The conscious effort to remain open and receptive to something greater than the self is based on the assumption that there is a force, entity, power, or intelligence willing to interact with those who seek contact.

The concept of diaphaneity, the act of receptivity thins the structures of consciousness that separate the unknown from the known, and the ego-self from the transpersonal and transegoic. Structures, as used here, are the beliefs, opinions, physical nature, and mental constructs—the "habitual identifications" (Welwood, 1997) that maintain one's normal reality or "baseline state of consciousness" (Tart, 1983, p. 5).

Mystery and the Tolerance for the Unknown

This core theme is conceptualized as a driving force behind the PSI phenomenon. It provides the wonderment, curiosity, and the energy for self-reflection paramount in PSI. It is comprised of two parts: mystery and tolerance for the unknown. Mystery, in a generally positive sense, is the source of questions, curiosity, awe, self-reflection, and wonder. It is also the source of fear, distrust, retaliation, and doubt. Due to the ubiquitous nature, it is a constant factor in all phases of human endeavor. Mystery is an active component of PSI, energizing spiritual questing, often resulting in the actualized phenomenon of PSI.

Just as the core theme, Everything Has a Spiritual Basis, provides the beliefs and justification for PSI, the degree of tolerance for the unknown provides the quality and type of energy given to PSI. Tolerance for the unknown determines the amount of interest or energy exerted in the attempt to bring into actuality that which is suspended in potential. It supplies the energy to render transparent the structures separating the self from universal consciousness.

Structures of Consciousness

Throughout this paper, PSI is identified with specific esoteric spiritual experiences, which evolved into a way-of-being in the world. Some experiences are characterized as

sudden and unexpected encounters with a spiritual consciousness. Other experiences of PSI are the result of deliberate spiritual practices. Both accounts, the spontaneous and the aspiration towards spiritual connection, reveal a shift in consciousness. The following discussion looks at the structures of consciousness that comprise the PSI experience.

The core theme, Universality and Transparency, points to a consciousness that exceeds the boundaries of the ego, and in so doing becomes "transegoic" (Washburn, 1995, p. 6). It is a consciousness that is experienced as a sense of unity, which is not only beyond the ego, but also beyond the duality found in a "mental-rational consciousness" (Feuerstein, 1987; Gebser, 1985). In a simplified version, this structure of consciousness is also referred to as "integral consciousness" (Feuerstein, 1987; Gebser, 1985; Washburn, 1995; Wilber, 1999).

In 1949, Swiss philosopher Jean Gebser presented his *magnum opus*, *Ursprung und Gegenwart*. The English translation referenced here, *The Ever-Present Origin*, was printed in 1985. In this seminal contribution to the study of consciousness, he identified five structures of consciousness: *archaic*, *magical*, *mythical*, *mental*, and *integral*. Gebser (1985) determined that the present domination of mental-rational consciousness is shifting into an integral consciousness. Mental or mental-rational consciousness carries within it all the other structures of consciousness, namely the archaic, magical, and mythical. It monitors and manages the influence of these other structures of consciousness with the tools of logic, reason, and scientific models of space, time, and causality. Mental-rational consciousness is about "irreconcilable dualities" and the stance that "reality is measurable, quantifiable, and systematizable [sic]" (Feuerstein, 1989). It is the structure of a fully formed, yet-to-be-transcended ego-consciousness. Mental consciousness is the predominant consciousness in the Western psychological model of mental health and treatment (Bergin, 1980; Shafranske & Malony, 1996; Welwood, 1997).

The integral consciousness "encompassing all time and embracing both man's distant past and his approaching future as a living present" (Gebser, 1985, p. 6) is further explained by Feuerstein (1987) as the "gesture toward ego-freedom, integrality, or diaphaneity . . . the whole-bodily event to describe the subjective experience of 'feeling through' the *lived* [italics in original] body in such moments of ego-transcendence" (p. 147). In other words, integral consciousness recognizes fully lived phenomena, not merely a cognitive awareness bereft of physical and emotional attributes. The definition of consciousness includes awareness through the senses and the cognizance of the mental processes. The acknowledgement of the physicality of integral consciousness is consistent with the physical nature of the mystical experiences associated with the phenomenon of PSI. Participants relate the physical nature of PSI as the subtle body-sense or a felt-sense of knowing, the rising of kundalini energy, electrical sensations, vibrations in the body, and haziness of vision.

Washburn (1995) identifies the *egoic stage* as the *mental ego*, characterized by an infrastructure that represses the *deep unconscious* and the experience of spirit. Duality is achieved by a predominance of mental-rational functions maintaining the split between the sense of the ego-self and the deep unconscious and objects. In contrast, transegoic consciousness transcends dualism and experiences a spiritual presence. This is a life-long process starting with the development of an age appropriate sense of self—an effective, appropriate, and stable ego. The mature ego evolves, again in degrees, beyond the confines of the mental ego, eventually embracing its spiritual source. This brief accounting of the evolution of the ego and consciousness identifies a process similar to

the experiences associated with the phenomenon of PSI—the experience of moving beyond the separate, self-contained ego-consciousness to a sense of unity with the Divine or Washburn's (1995) *dynamic ground*.

Conclusion

The goal of this study was to achieve a deep and thick description of the PSI phenomenon. The core themes give voice to subtle, variegated, complex, and deeply personal experiences of the sacred—which are often shrouded in mystery and linguistically constrained. This study demonstrates that personal numinous events, often characterized as ineffable, can be examined and described in sufficient detail—unlocking hidden and transforming wisdom obfuscated for lack of focused inquiry. The findings of this study provide an orientation for future research and a greater understanding of the influence of spirituality in a clinical setting.

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EXPERIENCES OF SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Ravindra Kumar, Ph.D.

Abstract: It is found that spiritual experiences are in accordance with the mental makeup of the person. I have summarized my own experiences with cosmic light and sound, with the experience of death, with the experience of seeing my own double, with out-of-body visits to several colonies on higher realms and talking to the inhabitants there, and with visits to spiritual planets that are self-illuminated and full of bliss. Dreams become very regular and informative. According to some authors, dreams are the language in which God talks to the dreamer. Ties with physical world being almost broken it is almost certain that the individual is not going to have any further incarnations on earth, unless one wishes so of one's own accord. There is a "divine plan" for the evolution of souls.

Introduction: Spiritual Awakening is accompanied with experiences of the spiritual nature that are not sensed by the five physical senses of hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting and touching. The inner faculties thus experience the cosmic light and sound, which are the twin pillars of God, and several other religious and psychical phenomena. These inner faculties continue to exist even after the demise of the physical body. Some other experiences of the religious and psychical nature are clairvoyance, precognition, telepathy, lucid dreaming, experience-of-death, experiences of bliss and intuitive knowledge, divine taste, divine touch, divine smell, seeing heavenly objects, seeing and talking to heavenly people, traveling in the past and future, out-of-body experiences, visits to other worlds—physical and non-physical, and visits to spiritual planets that are self-illuminated and inhabited by subtle beings.

There are certain experiences that are common to most experiencers and then there are some experiences that are individual and personal, pertaining to the category of the practitioner. Thus the experiences of bliss, loss of the fear of death and out-of-body experiences are mostly common to all.

Religious and psychical experiences take place with the practitioners according to their faith, upbringing and expectations. Thus God Absolute may appear as Buddha before a Buddhist, as Jesus Christ before a Christian, as Krishna before a Hindu, as Mohammed before a Moslem and as Guru Nanak before a Sikh. However, physical appearance of God takes place only in the case of practitioners who believe God to be with form and attributes, just to confirm the faith of believers in Him. According to another school of thoughts God is formless and attributeless and seekers of the path of knowledge realize God in abstract form.

Variety of experiences range from a clairvoyant viewing of burning of a house some 300 miles away, as in the case of Emmanuel Swedenborg, to visits to hell and heaven, as in the case of Swami Muktananda. Nonetheless, Swedenborg also visited higher realms many times in his subtle body and had free talks with heavenly beings, in more or less a scientific way of investigation about life after death. Muktananda's visits to hell and heaven, and talking to the Lord of Death in hell and to the Lord of Heaven in heaven were in confirmation with the religious texts as a tailor made program. This is the difference between the experiences of a scientific investigator and a religious practitioner.

TWICE BORN

The Awakening: I experienced death and paradoxically, in death I awakened to a new life. I was living in Zimbabwe in 1987.

At 5 a.m. on a balmy October morning while praying to God, I asked Him to help me on my path toward enlightenment. Feeling despair at my inability to access Him, tears flowed from my eyes. My rosary beads had fallen from my hands and I no longer sensed the world outside. Suddenly, I saw my dead body being carried on the shoulders of four people as they repeated the words, "Ravindra Kumar is dead." Emerging from this all engrossing and miserable situation, I felt relieved, peaceful and happy, a new horizon had opened before me. I felt that something had shifted in me. I did not know it then but this was my spiritual rebirth. My state of bliss and cheerfulness was overwhelming as I got up from my chair and left the room. The Zimbabwe sunrise was beginning to blossom as I went out for my usual long walk, bringing new-found happiness with me. Going to the mathematics department later that morning, my heart was no longer in my work. Telling others about my experience, I found they could not comprehend it. From that day on, I began losing interest in mathematics, my profession for more than 27 years.

Continuing to chant mantras and meditate as I had in the past, I was about to take tea in the evening about two weeks later, when suddenly my body began to twist like a snake. My tongue felt like it was coming out of my mouth, and there was immense heat coming from the crown of my head. Running out of the house, I took a brisk walk for half an hour, and then cycled on an indoor machine at home for another 20 minutes, I then had a cold drink and rested. The next day, the university doctor examined me and listened to every detail of my experience. He said clearly, if I had not been so healthy and physically fit I would be paralyzed today. He advised me to discontinue all meditative practices and not to lecture at the university for two weeks.

On that day in October 1987, after discontinuing all types of chanting and meditation, a wonderful series of experiences began to unfold. While continuing to pray each morning, on three occasions in the period of two months, I witnessed the Mother Goddess clad in a red silk sari with shining silver bangles. She sat smiling at me. Oh, what a beautiful face and shining eyes! I saw myself dressed in white, bowing down to her as She was blessing me with Her right hand touching my head. Following these visions, I was very cheerful and content. My focus shifted from

mathematics to religion and parapsychology. I started writing articles based on my experiences. They were published in *The Journal of Religion and Psychical Research*.

All faiths and traditions have talked about the primordial or unstruck Sound, which one hears internally in the successful states of meditation. It is this Sound which takes the Soul in tow towards God. My experiences with Sound began in the middle of the night when I got up to answer the call of nature. At around 2 a.m. I heard a constant sound, like the blowing of a conch shell. I asked everyone in the house if they heard something unusual, like an aeroplane flying over the house or the blowing of a conch shell. The household denied hearing anything. In the morning, I went to the university hospital where the doctor examined me. The doctor said there was nothing wrong with my ears. He had heard of cases where people hear internal sounds that either subside or continue, but in my case there was nothing to worry about. I still live with that sound today. It has become more clear and pronounced over the years.

My experiences with outer light started in 1984 while practicing meditation. I was teaching at the University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria at that time. Suddenly, on hearing a lightening sound, as if electricity had jumped between two poles, my eyes opened and I saw a six inch high and four inch wide column of white light standing four feet from my head. Amazed at seeing it, I looked around to find the source, but could find none. Shortly, the Light began to flicker and move left as it diminished in size and vanished completely after traversing about three feet. This Light was cool and bright and did not hurt my eyes rather it felt soothing. After that event my faith in the Divine increased and I remained happy, becoming less concerned with the external activities around me, and more interested with my thoughts and feelings of God.

An experience with Inner Light came two months after my awakening in 1987. In the early morning, as I was about to leave my bed, I saw blue Light through my inner eyes. Unusually attracted to it, I kept my eyes closed and continued to concentrate on the Light. After a while, I opened my eyes and found the light still there. Whether my eyes were open or closed, the blue light stood there, remained 10 to 15 minutes and then disappeared. Now when I close my eyes, the first thing I see is the blue light.

I had experienced what in the East is known as Kundalini, a spiritual awakening from within. Kundalini is the spiritual energy that lies dormant at the base of the spine. It is in the form of a snake, sitting with three-and-a-half coils, with its mouth closing the opening of central nerve along the spine, called Sushumna. Most of us have only 15 to 20 % of our brain working. When Kundalini awakens, sleeping parts of the brain begin to open, and the person begins to acquire unusual powers. This makes a person genius in his/her field of work. Outstanding achievements in any worldly field, and spiritual awakening or enlightenment, are the natural consequences of the arousal of Kundalini.

Freedom from Fear of Death: Everyone has some experience of fear and anxiety in their life. Fear is a normal response that includes feelings of disquiet or

alarm elicited by the realistic expectation of pain, danger or disaster. For example, if a thief enters your house and asks you to give away all your valuables at gun point. Your heart begins to beat faster, your body begins to shake and tremble, sweat appears on your forehead, you are embarrassed and scared to death. Anxiety is an irrational or overwhelming fear. It is one's subjective, distorted view of the circumstance. It is often based on an irrational belief. For example, your spouse has not returned home till late in the night and you begin to suspect that he/she might have met with an accident and may have been hospitalized. Death anxiety is defined as an overwhelming fear of death and/or dying and usually involves an all-encompassing fear about whether or not one will continue to exist in some form or fashion after physical death. It includes unrelenting fear of dying and anxiety about the unknown. It is man's biggest fear and we deal with it daily, most people repressing it. In repressing it they give rise to many other physical and psychological ailments. If the fear or anxiety is only at one time or another, then it is no big deal. The message of the book *Searching for Eternity* is that we can overcome the constant fear of death through a spiritual awakening and live the unrepressed life (Morse 2000). Freedom from death anxiety, therefore, requires to prove three components of life after death: a surviving soul, a positive after life and God.

A large number of researchers in the field of "past life regression" have convincingly shown the continuity of existence before birth and after death. This confirms the words of Lord Krishna spoken in Bhagavad-Gita some five thousand years ago. Other great ones, such as Gautam Buddha, Jesus Christ, Pythagoras, Confucius, Zoroaster and others further confirmed continuity of existence. The reason for death anxiety is that the people are so attached to the physical pleasures that they have no time to go into meditation themselves to find the proof. Those who have gone into meditation have found the proof and realized their status of existence-knowledge-bliss. Meditation ultimately gives the experience of death while still living, and liberates one from the fear of death once for all. Modern people take to temporary measures of drugs or diversion of attention, which gives only temporary relief; the dragon of fear shows up again later in life. Permanent solution comes only through the awakening of one's dormant spiritual energy.

Not only is my fear of death gone, but I find dying to be a sweet game one can play anytime. Quoting St. Paul, "I die daily." The fear of the unknown is gone since I now know the other side so well. For the last 15 years, I have been going out of my body and exploring various realms. The kind of life to be found on the other side depends on your personal evolution on earth. Although God is indefinable, you can experience Him, depending on the intensity of your desire. People have experienced Him as a touch, as a vision, as sound and light, and as a physical manifestation of their most cherished form of Him. My experiences with Him are briefly elaborated in the next section. I call this phenomenon, Reality-beyond-Seen-Personally (RBSP).

Reality-Beyond-Seen-Personally (RBSP): Soon after experiencing my awakening of Kundalini in 1987, I received first-hand knowledge of various astral sub-planes. I traveled to these places of light and saw living conditions similar to those on earth. One difference was, laws of physics did not apply there. People lived

in their astral bodies, similar in appearance to their earthly physical bodies. At times, I found myself on planes higher than the astral, and I did not have a physical body. My existence was either as a ball of light or simply without any dimension. There was no sun or moon, no duality of any kind; for example, there was only pleasant light and no shadow of any kind. Such planes are spiritual regions, which constitute three quarters of creation, while one fourth of creation has life with a solar system like ours (Prabhupad 1968). I experienced myself as a formless point of awareness. During this process, you may see dreams, coming in the four stages described by Jung and others (Jung 1964). In the final stage, you may see the manifestation of an Infinite God in the finite form of your liking.

With these experiences I received the proof of myself as a permanent Soul, living a useful and happy afterlife, and having a loving association with God. Needless to say, I have no place for death anxiety in my life, and I look forward to the day I will translate to the other side. We can choose our own method to achieve Higher Consciousness.

Kundalini rises through the seven central chakras (vortices of energy) on awakening. Out-of-body travel to higher realms, while asleep, occurs as a natural phenomenon when the third chakra, also known as the Manipura Chakra or Solar Plexus, awakens. Knowing unconditional love is a result of awakening the fourth, Anahata Chakra or Heart Center. One requirement of the First Commandment of Moses is, "thou shalt love thy neighbor," which is not what we normally do in life. The moment we think we can, we remember the day our neighbor did something we judged as wrong, and we will not or choose not to feel love for him. When the Heart Chakra opens, we transcend negative thoughts; now understanding and compassion replace judgement. You love your neighbor regardless of what he may have done. Inner-happiness and cheerfulness are your emotions, and a pleasant smile is naturally on your face. You become indifferent to the temporary phenomenal happenings surrounding you.

Opening of the Vishuddhi Chakra or Throat Center gives the power of clear speech, and freedom from dis-ease. This is one reason yogis look younger than their actual age. Opening the sixth center called the Ajna Chakra or Eye-Brow Center accompanies the (ego) death experience. Your ego fragments into a thousand pieces, and there is a spiritual resurrection. Devoid of ego, childlike, you qualify to enter the Kingdom of God. It is time to remember the words of Master Jesus who said that only a "childlike person" might enter the Kingdom of God. In addition, this Kingdom is within you, meaning that you are unconditionally happy and unconcerned by the events of the material world because you have found the non-material and permanent source of happiness. Gone is any dependence on temporary sources of pleasure or distraction, such as alcohol, smoking, sex, winning a lottery, seeing friends, television, shopping or traveling. You become independent of material things and live as a contented and cheerful person, with no requirements. That is how a liberated person or a yogi lives.

A person at this stage is known as "Twice Born" in the words of Master Jesus. The second birth takes place when one's dormant spiritual energy awakens. The

physical body received at the first birth is spiritualized in the second birth. With the second birth, we automatically enter the Kingdom of Heaven or higher realms. Seven-ness is an underlying principle of the universe, and a common denominator in various faiths and traditions around the world. Human awareness has seven levels; the universe divides into seven realms or planes. We are a permanent Soul or Atman transcending layers of ignorance as we rise through our levels of awareness. The Soul has paranormal powers. Scientists compare these personal case histories to quantum objects. We can choose from various methods for raising our consciousness to higher levels. One time-tested method is to awaken our Kundalini, the dormant spiritual energy we all possess.

THE DIVINE PLAN

Evidence and Motivation: During the last two decades, I have experienced out-of-body or soul-travel, in a different level of awareness, to various higher realms and communicated with other souls. Already intrigued with the idea of consciously speaking to someone living in a higher realm, the opportunity came after my father passed over. In September 1995, three years after my father's death, a clairvoyant friend in North Carolina assisted me in making contact. A spirit spoke through him saying that Ganga Singh (my father) was not strong enough to talk to me directly. However, as caretaker of the place where my father was recovering, he offered to converse with me and relay whatever my father said, while my father would hear me directly. Through this helpful spirit my father described a hospital setting where large numbers of people were recovering. After a long rest and feeling very relaxed, his broken leg was mending and soon he would be transferred to a region of brighter light. He wanted me to remove his possessions from the house so his attention would not be distracted, and requested to be emotionally released by all of his relatives. I asked if he had met my grandmother (his mother) yet, and he replied that she is in a higher region where he can see her but cannot go there directly. He wanted me to tell his wife (my mother) he is very well and no one should worry about him; we then spoke about other family matters. I expressed my sorrow at not being at his side when he left this world. He was also sorry, missed being with me and wanted to embrace me. He suggested we could meet in a dream thirty days later, if I agreed. Naturally, I said yes, and exactly thirty days later, we were walking and talking together in my dream.

The next opportunity to visit my father came in June 2000, at the home of my friend in North Carolina. In this vision, having recovered his strength, my father spoke to me directly, greeting me with folded hands. I experienced much joy, since now my father was talking to me directly, as compared to the last time, when some one was speaking on his behalf. Immediately, I lowered myself in prostration to touch his feet—a traditional Indian gesture of respect and reverence. Saying we were no longer father and son, but now two fellow souls, he expressed his pride at my progress and offered to guide me in my further quest for spiritual knowledge. When asked if he remembered his wife, he replied, "which one?" Other souls had partnered him in other lifetimes. He confided in revealing his new type of existence. In this existence, he sometimes felt like a cloud. He could take form if he wished, however, he felt no need. In this place, eating or drinking was no longer necessary. It was a

realm of unearthly colors, as he had never seen. The entire atmosphere was so lovely it was beyond earthly language's capacity to express. Going to meet friends or relatives required only a thought, but usually they would come to see him in groups. Several radiant and serene teachers came from time to time to offer lessons.

Curiously, I enquired about his next incarnation. He said that the choice had not come up yet. The concept of time did not exist and he was happy learning and enjoying his new life. Needing to go, he assured me that I could visit him whenever I wished. When I asked him if my visit had caused him any trouble, he reassuringly said, "no, not at all."

My medium friend suggested that I could talk to his "spirit guide," known as Guru Kirpal, who had translated from earth a few years ago. Guru Kirpal was the same spirit who helped me communicate with my father when my father was indisposed. On another occasion, I had an hour's conversation with Guru Kirpal. Guru Kirpal told me that he resided only on the mental plane. He explained that souls on the mental plane, on a still higher level, have very subtle bodies, sometimes visualized only as a flesh of light. They engage in spiritual pursuits and are teachers who visit whenever assistance is required.

After witnessing myself as a soul conversing with my father on the astral plane and Guru Kirpal on the mental plane, my natural next step was seeking other planes of existence and levels of consciousness. Here, I am going to present my observations of consciousness found on the seven levels, or what I call levels of awareness.

Properties of Soul: The term Soul is well defined in the Oxford dictionary as the non-material part of a person, believed to exist for ever; in the Webster's lexicon it is defined as an entity without material reality, often regarded as the spiritual part of a person. Combining these definitions with my personal experiences I'd personally define the term soul as "The Soul is the non-material and spiritual part of a person, that exists for ever."

Bhagavad-Gita (Prabhupad 1968) relates the teachings of Lord Krishna, spoken several millennia ago, with the following. For the Soul, there is neither birth nor death at any time. The Soul has not come into being, does not come into being, and will not come into being. The Soul is unborn, eternal, ever existing, and primeval. The Soul is not slain when the body is slain. As the embodied Soul passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, the Soul similarly passes into another body at death. An aware person is not bewildered by such a change. Those who are seers of the truth have concluded that of the temporal, (the material body) there is no endurance and of the eternal, (Soul) there is no change. They have concluded this by studying the nature of both. No one is able to destroy the imperishable Soul. As a person puts on a new garment, giving up the old one, the Soul similarly accepts a new material body, giving up the dead one. The Soul can never be cut by weapons, nor burned by fire, nor wet by water, nor withered by wind. The soul is everlasting, omnipresent and eternally unchanged. Understanding this, we need not grieve for the body. All beings are unmanifest in their beginning, manifest in their interim state, and

unmanifest again when transformed. So, is there need for lamentation?

It was not for the first time that the Bhagavad-Gita was spoken by Lord Krishna on the battlefield of Mahabharata, some five thousand years ago. Previously, tens of thousands of years ago on the planet Sun, the sage Manu taught the principles of the Bhagavad-Gita. The same principles will be taught once again, at some future date. Aldous Huxley (1944) called it perennial philosophy. As more details about the physics of the Soul surface, it is a pleasant surprise to see psychics, clairvoyants and past-life regression therapists independently discovering the same principles. Whatever the form, the soul is a consciously aware energy, a feeling being with memories, unresolved issues, and a sense of humor (Bodine 1999). The Soul is mightier than space, stronger than time, deeper than the sea, and higher than the stars (Twitchell 1970).

Traveling is an important aspect of the Soul. Connected to the body by a silver cord stretching to unlimited lengths when the Soul explores, the cord is released only at the time of physical death. The conscious mind governs the journey of the Soul out of the body or back into the body. Although Soul travel experiences mainly take place during sleep, the Soul also goes out for small trips during waking hours, although we may not consciously be aware of it. These are some of the signs, indicating out-of-the-body experiences.

- I Most flying dreams feeling real.
- II Dreams of visiting deceased loved ones.
- III Dreams of being close to a loved one living in a far away place, with a sad feeling of a forced separation on waking.
- IV Waking ups in the middle of the night but you cannot open your eyes, move your body, or speak.
- V You are shaken awake in the middle of the night, but you go to sleep again after waking.

There are brief moments when the Soul goes out of the body while awake. This happens during intense emotional states, such as worry for a sick loved one, desire of being with a loved one who is far away, homesickness, checking up on the children or concern about responsibilities in progress somewhere else. It may feel like daydreaming or going blank. During such an experience, you may kiss or hug someone; the person will not know it consciously but will have a feeling of being loved. Many times, you may feel someone is calling you by name; in fact, a Soul is actually around and calling you, but you cannot see anyone. There is a barrier in the conscious mind not allowing the mind to know everything the Soul knows. That is why when the Soul goes out, the mind goes blank. The Soul has visited the loved one, but the conscious mind does not know about it. The Soul uses the body and mind for the experiences of the current incarnation. The body and mind have been limited within the five senses but the Soul is not. Gary Zukav discusses how, as we evolve spiritually, our intuitive perceptions also evolve (Zukav 1989). We are becoming multi-sensory beings.

Although Soul-travel dreams may occur spontaneously, some people have learned to induce them. The sleep state is one way to have an out-of-body

experience, but not the only way. Terrill Wilson described his method of working consciously (Wilson 1987). His first success came after one year's practice of concentration. By visualizing the environment and history of an area, he could arrive at his desired destination. Over the years he soul-traveled to many realms and interacted with other beings. Over time, he improved his formulas for travel and included them in his books. In the end however, he pointed out that spiritual awakening and not Soul-travel will bring us where we are destined to be.

There are other situations where soul travel takes place. If you go to bed with an unsolved problem in mind, the Soul may go out of the body and meet other Souls to find the solution, and you wake up with an answer. You do not consciously know the homework done by the Soul, but you are happy for the information. The Soul regularly talks to spirit guides. When physically unable to take a vacation, the Soul may travel out of the body, visit some beautiful place, such as a favorite garden or mountain meadow. You wake up with a smile, refreshed but unconscious of the gift delivered by the Soul.

Robert A. Monroe established an institute for Soul-travel in the United States after writing several books on the subject. In these books, he describes three techniques. The first is the mind awake, body asleep method in which one remains conscious when the body goes to sleep. While one slowly enters the twilight zone between waking and sleeping, one thinks of becoming lighter and lighter and finally moves out through the top of the head or simply finds oneself as the subtle body looking back on the physical body. The second is the method of rotation, in which one visualizes turning over without using the physical arms and legs, while in the state between waking and sleeping, and then thinks of floating away from the body. The third method uses sexual energy to arouse passionate energy and then sublimate that energy instead of releasing it physically. One imagines the energy as a white globe rising from the root chakra to the eyebrow or crown chakra moving from the body. During Soul-travel, there may be many sensations, like buzzing or vibrating. Everyone will experience his or her own style.

Creation of Souls: Although the birth time of a Soul cannot be traced back, some believe it was fifteen billion years ago. Many writers also refer to old and new Souls. These same writers say old Souls have lived many lives, gaining wisdom in the process, while young ones are just now stepping onto wisdom's path. Old Souls leave their bodies quickly as the body dies. Average Souls do not leave so rapidly, and younger Souls may remain linked to the Earth's environment for a time after death (Newton 1994). Highly advanced Souls are often found in humble circumstances. A rich diversity of beliefs and contentment in solitude are measures of the emotional and spiritual maturity of old souls. These writers propose new Souls are continually being created.

In the eastern spiritual tradition of Enlightened Indian Gurus and Tibetan Lamas, the Soul has never been born and can never die. The energy of the Soul is in the same infinite state as Cosmic Consciousness or God. All that exists or ever will exist arose in the same universal moment. Whenever enlightened men and

women in the West have written on this topic, their views seem to be in agreement with their Eastern counterparts.

These are two ways of seeing the experience of the Soul. As there are infinite possibilities both of these may be correct within the framework of those having the experience. Our beliefs or understandings will condition our experiences. To cope with the concept of infinity we may need to create the experience of birth to give us a reference point that is closer to our understanding of what it is to exist in time and physical space.

Past-life therapist Michael Newton has regressed a number of people, using hypnosis, to collect information about the creation of Souls. Two categories of his patients report remembering a Soul Nursery; complete with Incubator Mothers who helped in hatching the eggs and caring for newly born Souls. The nursery is a vast space of vaporous, swirling energy currents infused with intense light. Soul production originates in a molten mass of high-intensity vitality, energized by an amazing love force. The pulsating, undulating pink mass swells in the middle, increasing in size; it pushes outwards and separates as a new Soul, alive with energy and uniqueness. New Souls are distinct masses of white energy, sheathed in golden light, gliding majestically in orchestrated lines of progression. Incubator mothers in their delivery suits receive them and nurture them in their incubator cells until they are ready. This is a realm of love and beauty cradled in a beatific glow of orange-yellow light, with infinite violet darkness beyond. Each Soul has unique characteristics instilled by a perfection that cannot be described. No two Souls are alike.

The Divine Plan: Creation offers to the Soul an opportunity to develop the world and the Soul to the highest possible potential. Unlimited life times are allowed each Soul to attend earth school. Perfection already exists, but each Soul has to reach that realization of perfection individually. This requires going through a variety of "down-to-earth-experiences," until achieving self-realization.

A Soul may be born as a male or female in a series of lives, such as the present Dalai Lama in his 13th incarnation, or as the present Guruma, in Sonapat (India), in her sixth consecutive incarnation as a female saint. The past life researcher Joan Grant remembered her seven previous lives, four as a male and three as a female (Guiley 1991). The Soul alternates between male and female incarnations to experience both sides of the coin, until a balance between the masculine and feminine nature is acquired. This is the goal of the evolutionary process on earth, taught by different faiths and traditions. Ardhanareeshwara, the half-male-half-female figure of Lord Shiva in India; the hermaphrodite in Judaism and Gnosticism; and the androgynous god/goddess in Greek mythology; all point toward this reality. King David of the Old Testament is a good example. His son challenged King David for the throne, as a rebellion. David fought and killed his son, giving proof of his masculine energy. But then he wept for many days grieving for his lost son, giving proof of his female energy. If his faithful minister had not stopped David's excessive mourning, David's balance and the battle would have been lost. In the present time, a person should endeavor to become equally "intellectual and intuitive," to achieve this

balance.

Looking at other situations, a Soul is sometimes born as a poor person, and sometimes as a rich person, to experience both situations, ultimately striking a balance. Sometimes one is born to develop into an oppressor, and another time as a pawn. Sometimes one is born in the East, and sometimes in the West. Buddha gave the example of a stringed musical instrument. If the strings are too tight or too loose, the instrument will not produce melodious sounds. When a balanced tension develops in the strings, a harmonious situation is created. This principle applies to human life. Under the "divine plan" the Soul is offered all possible opportunities to achieve to this balance. Whenever such a balance is attained, the Soul graduates from earth school. In the remaining years of that life, a person lives without desires or attachment, happy and cheerful, unchained to the past, with an absence of speculation about the future, and he/she lives with unconcern regarding the present.

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A COMPARISON OF PSYCHIC AND RELIGIOUS SOURCES ON LIFE AFTER DEATH

Montague Keen

Abstract: Religious conviction in the survival of man's soul after death is based essentially on faith; belief founded on psychic experience is derived essentially from evidence. For the Christian, admission of this evidence poses problems both dogmatic and philosophical which are very difficult to reconcile, since by far the most persuasive documentation and testimony supporting some form of religious belief clashes with the most fundamental of Christian tenets. The paper examines some earlier and very recent evidential scientific work strongly supporting the hypothesis of survival and thereby underpinning an essentially religious philosophy.

It ought to be an essential preliminary to start with definitions. In matters theological, however, it is normally fatal, because it begs the very issue at the heart of the problem. But let us be cavalier and take for the purposes of our examination a definition of a religious source of belief in survival as one derived from either authority or personal revelation of an essentially subjective nature. Authority, in this context, must clearly include the commonest of all sources of belief: upbringing and education. To this we may add a sense of the numinous, even of epiphany when experiencing a damascene revelation, witnessing a Marian apparition, or being saved from personal disaster by the intervention or guidance of a guardian angel. These are intrinsically personal experiences which, however powerful and life-changing, have not withstood the detached analysis of a critical world subservient to the convention that only objectively verifiable, preferably replicated, events may count. By contrast, the expression "psychic sources" presupposes the presence some sort of tangible evidence, of value and influence in theory as equal to those who receive as to those who assess it. For the purposes of this examination at least, it must be so if we are to avoid sterile debate on the distinction between a belief founded largely on some impressive vision of the ghost of a recently deceased loved one, and the same conviction derived from a controlled experiment in mediumship communication.

Of necessity such definitions are arbitrary and question-begging. Many who have experienced guidance from what they believe to be angelic counsellors will stoutly affirm the religious nature of that frequently encountered phenomenon; but to the psychical researcher who does not dismiss it as a psychotic aberration it would be considered simply a manifestation of a psychic faculty. If we are to examine how religion treats the concept of survival, we must ignore this extensive grey area of definition; and for this purpose we take Christianity as representing the most powerful and pervasive influence in the Western world for the last two millennia.

It is an essential part of the Christian doctrine, of course, that adherents not merely accept the concept of survival but recognise it as an essential part of the dogmatic basis of their religion. While it has proved possible for unruly clerics from time to time to question the truth of the virgin birth, or even the concept of the Trinity, it is not possible, without undermining the entire *raison d'être* of the birth and ministry of Jesus, to challenge basic

Christian doctrine. Only if the obedient Christian, once baptised, embraces the truth of the gospel and accepts the divinity and sacrificial death of his Saviour, can he escape in the afterlife the grim consequences of man's fall from grace and his own misdeeds.

But while belief in the reality of an afterlife is integral to Christianity, there is ambivalence about the production of evidence to support it. For many centuries the Church has emphasised that it is faith that must be at the heart of religious belief and acceptance of the Christian message. Inculcated from childhood, contagious in society and authoritarian in approach, faith is deemed a more dependable, a safer basis. Arguments from evidence are always susceptible to challenge. There is hardly a passage in the Old and New Testaments which has not been subject to the destructive scepticism of historical analysis or the doubts of exegetical scholarship. Evidence based on communication from purported spirits has been rejected more vigorously on theological than on practical grounds, but both have played their part.

Most commentators have confined themselves to a discussion of the theological reasons for the anathematisation of mediumistic communications, but to the non-theologian the pragmatic motives to account for the Churches' antipathy appear more persuasive. Although subject to differing interpretations, there is general consensus that passages in both Old and New Testaments prohibit seeking to communicate with spirits. Whatever the historic justification for this attitude in the days when more credence was attached to witchcraft and diabolical possession, the practical reasons for the prohibition became very clear from the 1850s onwards, as the wildfire spread of Spiritualism across the USA, and thence to Britain, presented a distinctly unorthodox view of the afterlife. Messages purporting to come from the dead, or – worse still – from so-called controls acting as superior switchboard operators for these transmissions, or from superior intelligences some of which claimed never to have lived on this Earth, threatened to undermine the foundations of Christianity.

It is in the nature of evangelical movements, as with political parties, to bifurcate. Schisms characterise the early, middle and recent history of the spiritualist movement much as they did the medieval papacy or post-Reformation non-conformity. What from the earliest days divided spiritualists was not doubt of the genuineness of the communicators but the difficulty of squaring their messages with the recipients' Christian beliefs. Despite their generally vague if platitudinously uplifting content, there was virtual unanimity in such communications about the absence of hell and damnation (1). Sins on earth were to be atoned for by self-punishment, or through experiencing the suffering caused to others, not through the retribution of hellfire. No single human religion was right or had a monopoly of truth. On bodily death the soul, far from being embraced in Heaven or cast into Hell, according to whether the individual had committed himself to Jesus, begins a long and often painful spiritual journey onwards and upwards to superior realms of enlightenment and sanctity.

Whereas it is precisely this total disdain of dogma that has attracted many adherents, the rebuttal of the historic Christian doctrine relating to the nature and character of God was bound to bring forth the sternest denunciation from guardians of the Christian faith. In the extensive messages of spiritualist literature, it would be difficult to find anything which supported, or was even consistent with, the doctrine of the Fall of Man. Removal of that keystone is fatal to the doctrine of vicarious atonement; and since the theological basis of Christianity is rendered meaningless without that concept, and Jesus reduced to the status of any other Old Testament prophet, it is hardly surprising that Christian apologists should have seen in the generalised ecumenism of spiritualists' communications a threat more serious than that embodied in the appearance of minor and usually ephemeral splinter churches.

What characterised Spiritualism was, and remains to this day, its soporific attitude to theology. Indeed, most spiritualists deny that their belief constitutes a religion: it is consistent with the worship of God, or a divine guiding spirit, but that is about the total extent of common ground.

Why should the experience and opinions of a few million spiritualists matter to the might of the Established Churches? It was because Spiritualism (which, for the purposes of this essay shall be deemed to embrace mediumistic communications of all kinds, whether formalised in a sacred assembly or manifested in the intimacy of a domestic séance) has provided virtually the only non-religious i.e. non-subjective, evidence of the existence and nature of the Hereafter. And it was evidence thoroughly unpalatable to upholders of the exclusive legitimacy of the Christian faith.

That statement requires immediate qualification: "non-religious" evidence of survival means veridical information purporting to derive from discarnate intelligences, or deduced from cases of ostensible possession or reincarnation, as distinct from biblical sources, saintly miracles, personal revelation or mystical experience.

For many of those who experienced the disturbing but ambiguous revelations of the ouija board, the planchette, the entranced medium, the platform clairvoyant or the eccentricities of automatic writing, the oburgations of theologians for their transgressions were usually incapable of overwhelming the conviction that they engendered. The days when evidence of such communication was a confession of heresy or an invitation to participate in the next auto-da-fé or an admission of witchcraft had all but disappeared by the middle of the 19th century. Although the advance of science, and the bombshell of *The Origin of Species*, gave the Church more troublesome challenges to meet, the nominally conformist Christian of whatever denomination was rarely worried about the niceties of theology; and indeed many would have confessed themselves astonished to discover the meaning and implications of the doctrines to which they regularly but mindlessly confessed nominal adherence.

That the churches' attitude to survival evidence from mediumistic sources was neither consistent nor clear is easily explained and readily illustrated. Biblical authority could certainly be invoked to prohibit attempts to contact the dead, but it could do little to prevent the dead from initiating the process. Clergyman (both Anglican like Stainton Moses or Charles Tweedale or non-conformist like Drayton Thomas) found nothing in their extensive dealings with the Departed to undermine their Christian faith, and much to sustain it (2).

Yet the literature of Christian apologists until quite recent times reflects a virulent antipathy to spiritualism in general and to the business of discarnate communication in particular. The dubious quality and unreliable authenticity of the messages provided a minor but useful supporting argument, since all too frequently the purported communicators failed elementary tests of identification, revealed lapses, anachronisms and incongruities inconsistent with authenticity, let alone common sense. Indeed falsehood, personation and deception were generally recognised even by the spiritualist leaders themselves to be a constant feature and an inescapable risk of the communication business. But to the orthodox Christian, it was only too apparent that the hand of Satan was in it, leading the unwary or foolhardy away from the virtuous pathways of Mother Church, seducing the innocent or disobedient into that region of sinfulness, however inadvertent, whose consequence is mortal peril. Possession of the soul, whether characterised as a diabolical intrusion or the terrene frustration of earth-bound entities able neither to accept the fact nor cope with the consequences of their own demise, was a certain route to perdition for the Christian, although little more than a constant but avoidable hazard for the practising spiritualist.

A religious source of belief in survival which is inspirational or dogmatic – faith-determined, promulgated and enforced by Authority and not susceptible to assault from mere human testimony – is strictly incomparable with evidence-based conviction. It's a chalk-and-cheese contrast. Cheese is valueless for writing on blackboards, and chalk likewise for human consumption. Both are to be assessed by different standards of utility. Both can complement and strengthen one another, but remain independent.

Throughout, I have implicitly equated the psychic source of survival evidence with mediumistic communication. This may raise the eyebrows of professional parapsychologists whose understanding of psychic matters infrequently encompasses anything to do with survival. Indeed, since the days of J. B. Rhine (3), and thanks not a little to his influence, parapsychology has gained a foothold in the psychology departments of universities only by holding its skirt well above the mire of occultism, and disdaining involvement with any postulate which wanders uncomfortably far from the human psyche. Formal psychical research, as practiced in our orthodox institutions of learning, has earned some grudging respectability and recognition as much by its avoidance of involvement with anything touching on ostensibly discommensurate communication as by the rigour of its experimental procedures and (consequent) dedication to probability calculation.

That is now changing, thanks to the ground-breaking work of Robertson and Roy in the UK and Gary Schwartz and his associates in the USA. (4) They are giving fresh validation to the vast assembly of largely neglected evidential survivalist material gathered and examined during more than a century of critical investigation by psychical researchers long before the straitjacket of laboratory-based parapsychological research concentrated on the quadruple facets of ESP: telepathy, precognition, clairvoyance and psychokinesis, none of which, challenging though they are to reductionist materialism, ventures for explanation too far beyond the individual or collective psyche.

The ingredient which has made so much of this work acceptable to conventional science is its susceptibility to quantification, and some form of repetition or replication. That had always been lacking in the so-called spontaneous case category into which all mediumistic experiences were deemed to fit. The fresh experimental approach to judging the evidential worth of discommensurate information allows it to be subjected to the analytical rigour of statistical assessment.

So in speaking about psychic evidence relating to survival I am referring to what until recently were loosely described as spontaneous cases. Hallucinations, or phantasms of the dead, premonitory warnings seemingly emanating from the guidance of deceased protectors, or strangely accurate duplications by unskilled hands of hidden works by deceased musicians, novelists and artists: these oddities, unpredictable, uncontrollable, impressively evidential to participants and investigators but either ignored or disparaged by critics, have failed to meet the tests of replication, objective measurement and statistical evaluation: tests of the paranormal constrained by the requirements and appropriate to the standards of the normal.

By far the most important and influential evidence of the persistence of intelligent communication from those who appear to have survived mortal death comes from mediums; and although a high proportion of this evidence is not associated with Spiritualism – indeed is derived from mediums and investigators often quite hostile to Spiritualism – it nevertheless provides us with by far the most extensive and persuasive evidence of afterlife. Week by week, and virtually day by day to devoted viewers of the Living and Discovery and UK Horizon satellite TV channels, we are treated to televised demonstrations in which seemingly veridical messages are transmitted to apparently astonished recipients who readily testify to the accuracy of minor but highly significant and previously forgotten details of their lives as recalled by their deceased relatives or friends via such platform mediums as

John Edward, Colin Fry, Derek Acorah and James van Praagh. In defiance of the evidence that the authenticity of these messages cannot be entirely attributable to the familiar explanations of cold reading, body language, fishing or prior knowledge (at least, not without conspiratorial collaboration between TV staff, mediums and recipients), sceptics continue to dismiss what cannot be produced in double-blind conditions under the clinical observation of trained experts aided by video recordings (5).

The quality and reliability of this evidence, however, has more recently been fortified by the Robertson-Roy-Schwartz experiments which combine the characteristics of spontaneous phenomena with the rigour of the laboratory trial, leading to disinterested validation of statistical probability calculations. By eliminating all sensory clues through the introduction of single- or double-blind procedures, the probability of a chance explanation to account for accurate identification of deceased relatives of an unseen recipient, has risen to astronomical levels. To those whose approach to this evidence is severely cerebral, the conviction that some sort of afterlife is the only reasonable explanation generates its own faith, a faith that many would hesitate to characterise as essentially religious.

This is no mere theoretical distinction. We have the examples of several leading researchers whose conversion from agnostic scepticism to reluctant acceptance of belief in survival was the product of many years of investigation and critical analysis. Plagued as they were on the one hand by the practitioners of fraud, and on the other by the ridicule of their intellectual peers, their investigations were motivated not by a desire to rationalise a pre-existing religious faith which most had never possessed or had long since forsaken, but by a life-long pursuit of truth, bringing the cold penetration of intelligent scepticism to an examination of claims of the paranormal.

By 1900, largely in consequence of the prolonged testing under conditions of the utmost stringency of mediums like Leonore Piper, such pioneers as that former scourge of mediumistic claimants, Dr Richard Hodgson, along with Sir Oliver Lodge, Frederic Myers, James Hyslop – even the great William James – were unable to resist the clear evidence for the extensive use of extra-sensory perception, and the likelihood that some at least of the communications were most likely to have come from discarnate sources.

Among those who had seriously studied the evidence, there were two major areas of disagreement, however. At a lower level, the dispute was between those who, while not challenging the evidence, argued that all might be derived from a mediumistic ability to draw information from living sources. Even where validation took place only after the event, it was suggested that precognitive clairvoyance could have been employed to foresee the discovery of the document which would eventually be found to validate the message. Even for those to whom this theory overstretched the limits of credulity, however, there was one outstanding problem posed by the alternative hypothesis of survival: the difficulty of ascribing to any communicator a provable identification a known deceased person. That problem had been made the more acute by the frequency with which communicators claiming to be former friends and associates of their earthly inquirers failed to provide the sort of confirmatory biographical details which it was felt reasonable to expect.

The solution to this problem was to create what many subsequent commentators have considered the most persuasive evidence for the survival of human personality: the cross correspondences (6). By spreading fragments of a message through the pens or mouths of different mediums in different places at varying times, messages in themselves meaningless became coherent and meaningful when the pieces were assembled by perceptive analysts. Thus the theory that all could be explained by the subliminal competence of individual mediums was to be defeated.

The source of these fragmentary messages was in nearly all cases that of one or more discarnate communicators, a number of whom were clearly identifiable by their outstanding intelligence, their familiarity with the personalities on earth who burdened themselves with the task of interpreting the normally arcane messages, and by their knowledge of the classics. This they employed in a fashion so erudite that few could identify the tortuous references. The communications extended over a period of more than thirty years. They involved well over a dozen mediums in several different countries; and while those most deeply engaged in the intellectual jigsaw puzzles gradually became convinced that no explanation beyond that of plain survival was worthy of a credible explanation, the complexity and obscurity of the messages, the abundance of classical knowledge required for a complete grasp of their meaning, and the very ingenuity employed in the transmissions, ultimately proved self-defeating. Today, more than seventy years since the cross-correspondences petered out in deference to the plea of the ageing interpreters to abate their flow, few have time, knowledge or enthusiasm for the task of re-assessing their evidential worth.

The cross-correspondences may be regarded as the intellectual peak of the psychic research mountain range. Few would wish or be able to scale it. They meet a challenge which becomes necessary only when the evidence itself is accepted as evidential, and is intended as a gauntlet to the few, such as Richet, Dodds, or in more recent times Braude (7) who are both familiar with the literature (a rare qualification among sceptics) yet resist the daunting implications of a survivalist hypothesis. Since we are concerned here less with the strength and substance of the evidence but the extent to which it has proved a potent factor in acceptance of post-mortem survival, it would be better to examine those other areas of investigation which have attracted more attention, especially in recent years. Apart from the growth of popular mediumship demonstrations on television programs, whose producers would doubtless claim them as the most important provider of evidential material, there are near-death experiences (NDE) and children who remember past lives.

Reports by patients who have been wrenched back from apparent death when unconscious or even clinically brain dead, yet have recovered to record memories of their mental experience, are not everywhere considered to be good evidence of an afterlife, since the patients never cross the border but only appear to reach the boundary gate. Nevertheless the accumulation of evidence since the pioneering work of Moody and Ring (8) in the 1970s has clearly revealed a consistency of experience which transcends religious and environmental factors, and sometimes yields firm evidence that events physically unknowable to the unconscious patient are none the less recorded and recalled when the patient returns to consciousness. The last remnant of the theory that all can be explained by such physical factors as oxygen deprivation, hyperactivity of glandular secretions or the effect of drugs or anaesthetics, was disposed of as recently as February, 2003 in a UK television programme dedicated to NDEs.

The circumstances in which such experiences occur may be classified under the heading of psychic phenomena, but for those who have undergone this traumatic ordeal, the effect is more closely akin to a religious experience of life-affecting magnitude. More emotionally detached, but considerably more potent as evidence of afterlife, is the abundance of cases examined over a period of more than 40 years by Ian Stevenson, Erlendur Haraldson and others (9). Of these, the most impressive concern children whose birthmarks are closely related to the location of injuries received at the time of their (normally violent) deaths by those whose lives the children appear to inherit. The wealth of detailed knowledge of their previous families and environments exhibited by very young children has posed all but insuperable problems for those rare critics bold enough to challenge evidence they would be more prudent to avoid.

Most people remain detached from essentially intellectual demonstrations appearing to confirm the continuity of human personality beyond death – until and unless they are underpinned and fortified by a personal experience. It is as though they have been convinced that jumping into the void at 30,000 feet is perfectly safe if elementary precautions are followed; but until the experiment is attempted, the conviction is rarely converted into a profound emotional experience which transports mere intellectual proof into spiritual realms. Whatever the theological niceties of the Christian faith, for those who can no longer doubt that they have been in direct or vicarious contact with their loved ones beyond the grave, the experience conveys what obedience to Church attendance so often fails to provide: evidence that survival is no mere Sunday service mantra balanced precariously on a faith attenuated by adult doubt, but a living certainty which can transform the life and elevate the consciousness of those who are patient and privileged enough to undergo the experience.

Endnotes:

1. A good example of Christian acceptance of spirit communication but denunciation of Spiritualists' literature is found in *Modern Spiritualism* by J Godfrey Raupert (Kegan Paul, London, 1909) or, still more vociferously, in *The Menace of Spiritualism* by Elliot O'Donnell (T. Werner Laurie, 1920).
2. Some of their literature was widely influential at the time. *News from the Next World* by the Rev. Charles L. Tweedale (T. Werner Laurie, London 1940) and his earlier work, *Man's Survival After Death* (The Richards Press, London) are resolutely defensive of Christianity. Paul Beard's scholarly book *The Survival of Death* (Psychic Press, 1986) carried a glowing foreword by one of the outstanding Christian leaders of his day, Dr Leslie Weatherhead. Many dedicated Spiritualists deplored the hostility of Christian spokesmen. Their views are well conveyed in J Hewat McKenzie's *Spirit Intercourse: Its Theory and Practice* (College of Psychic Science, 1918-1936).
3. J. B. Rhine's principal works, *Extra-Sensory Perception* (Faber and Faber, London, 1935) and *New Frontiers of the Mind* (Faber and Faber, London, 1938), changed the entire course of psychical research, diverting it primarily into the laboratory and eschewing anything connected with the survival of consciousness.
4. Their experiments have been reported in a number of peer-reviewed publications, e.g. Schwartz G.E.R. and Russek L.G.S (2001) *Evidence of anomalous information retrieval between two research mediums: telepathy, network resonance and continuation of consciousness*. JSPR 65, 4, 257-275; Schwartz G.E.R. et al (2001) *Accuracy and replicability of anomalous after-death communication across highly skilled mediums*. JSPR 65, 1, 1-25; Schwartz G.E.R et al (2002) *Accuracy and Replicability of anomalous information retrieval: replication and extension*. JSPR 66, 3, 144-156; Robertson T. J. and Roy A.E. (2001) *A preliminary study of the acceptance by non-recipients of mediums' statements to recipients*. JSPR 63, 91-106; Roy, A.E. and Robertson T.J. (2001) *A double-blind procedure for assessing the relevance of a medium's statement to a recipient*. JSPR 65.3 161-175.
5. Regular examples of sceptical derision are to be found in the official organ of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP), *The Skeptical Inquirer*. Prometheus Press specialises in publishing books which illustrate the lengths to which sceptics go to misrepresent paranormal evidence. Among the best known are Joe Nickell's *Secrets of the Supernatural* (1988) and Ray Hyman's *The Elusive Quarry* (1989). Other major works of scepticism are *Science and the Paranormal* edited by George Abell and Barry Singer (Junction Books, 1981), and *Bizarre Beliefs* by Simon Hoggart and Mike Hutchinson (Richard Cohen, 1995.)
6. The ablest summary of the cross-correspondences and their significance is probably found in the oddly-titled book *Zoar* (Sidgwick and Jackson, 1961) by W. H. Salter, a

former SPR President whose wife and mother-in-law were two of the chief mediums involved.

7. Professor Charles Richet's *Thirty Years of Psychical Research* (Collins, 1922) and Professor E. R. Dodds' *Why I do not Believe in Survival* (Proc. SPR 42, 135, 147-172) give similar reasons for accepting the accuracy of the evidence from mediums but deny that survival is a necessary logical deduction. Stephen Braude, a philosophy professor, in his *The Limits of Influence: Psychokinesis and the Philosophy of Science* (Routledge, 1986) emerges as a modern exponent of super-Psi as an alternative to survival.
8. Raymond Moody's two books, *Life after Life* and his sequel, *Reflections on Life After Life* (Bantam Books 1975-8) were followed by a more specialist examination of the evidence by Professor Kenneth Ring (*Life at Death*, Coward McCann & Geoghegan, New York, 1980), succeeded by a large number of studies by such well known writers as D. Scott Rogo (e.g. *Life After Death*, Guild Publishing, 1986), Michael Sabom (*Recollections of Death*, Harper & Row, 1982) and (for an attempted naturalistic explanation) Susan Blackmore (*Beyond the Body*, Heinemann, 1982)
9. The culmination of Professor Stevenson's examination of children who remember past lives came with the publication in 1997 of his massive but still inadequately recognised two-volume study of *Reincarnation and Biology* (Praeger, Westport, Conn).

Biographical details

Montague Keen is a former UK Parliamentary Lobby Correspondent, editor of specialist journals, and an agricultural administrator. A prizeman of the Royal Agricultural College, he has farmed in East Anglia, England, for over thirty years. A member of the Society for Psychical Research since 1946, he serves on its Council as Chairman of the Image and Publicity Committee and Secretary of the Survival Research Committee. He is the principal author, with Professors Arthur Ellison and David Fontana, of the 300 page Scoble Report on an investigation into the phenomena of physical mediumship, published as part of the SPR's Proceedings in 1999. He has written and lectured extensively on aspects of psychical research.

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PANEL – THE VARIETIES OF RELIGIOUS AND PSYCHICAL
EXPERIENCES: PERSONAL AND GLOBAL

James E. Beichler, Ph.D., Demaris Drewry, Ph.D., Montague Keen,
John Franklin Miller III, Ph.D., Rev. Don Rose, Frank E. White, Ph.D.

Abstract: The six panelists speak on experiences in meditation, calling on spiritual beings for help, mind reading, premonitions, answers to prayer, seeing everything as frequencies and vibrations, paradigm shifts and interact with the audience on issues such as the inhibitions of the ruling belief system grounded in philosophical materialism, the criteria for accepting evidence of personal religious and psychical experience and the skeptic-believer continuum.

John Miller: On Sunday evening when I spoke to you I shared an experience of going into meditation to meet a particular spiritual teacher Pythagoras. When I went into meditation there were four others. I am reminded of a particular book by Napoleon Hill, *Think and Grow Rich* a very well known book about how to use desires and thoughts and the power of the mind to bring about effects in one's life. In the last chapter of his book he talks about a mastermind group. He began to imagine that the people to whom he wanted to meet, I think one was Edison, one was Lincoln, and I forget who all the others were. He would go into a slightly altered state of consciousness and imagine these people. What he found quite soon was that it was no longer his imagination. He could not control what he saw. I think it was Lincoln who would always come late regardless of how he imagined it. I recall when I was beginning to enter into the metaphysical spiritual world view, the first book I read was Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi*. And Yogananda talks about his guru, Sri Yukteshar, and his guru's guru who was Babaji. In that late chapter of the book where Yogananda is talking about that great master, he says that if anyone reverently calls the name of Babaji that he will instantly receive a blessing. I remember I laid the book down on the sofa and I lifted my eyes up and I called that name and immediately I was overcome by a beautiful presence. Every time in subsequent years when I would, teach meditation I would after a number of weeks of practicing meditation, lead the class to that level of consciousness and would call Babaji.

When I was teaching in 1990 with the University of Pittsburgh's Semester at Sea, the ship that went around to Japan, China and so on, I had written at each port, Sri Sathya Sai Baba, who is an avatar, or at least that's claimed, the descent of the divine into flesh. As we approached Madras that evening, I taught a class in world religions and the class got over at 5:00 P.M. and we didn't eat until 6:00 P.M. and so there was an hour between the time the class was over and the time of eating. I led a meditation and as we approached Madras I used three mantras, one, Kala, which vibrates with the astral plane; two, Rama, which vibrates with the mental plane, and then finally Aum, which vibrates with the spiritual plane. We did not come down from the Kala or the Rama so the vibrations built and built. After three quarters of an hour when we were doing Aum I said just stop and be in this state of vibration. I was at the spiritual level and I thought we are going to see Sai Baba, why don't I call him. I called mentally Sai Baba, Sai Baba, Sai Baba. I can tell you on the inner planes his presence is overwhelmingly beautiful, powerful and loving. I told him we were going to come to visit him.

When we got there we flew from Madras to Bangalore and took the bus up into Putaparthi and Sai Baba came out. I leaned forward and made eye contact with him. He walked right over to where we were sitting, I was sitting with an older gentleman, and he stopped in front of the fellow and asked where he was from. The gentleman said the SS Universe. With that he took his hand and his hand was a close as Kelly's eyes are to my hand. I was in the optimal position; my eyes were a foot and a half from his hand. I knew he was going to materialize something because this is one of the things he does all the time. He waved his hand in a circle and when he opened it there was a pile of vibuthi, the sacred ash, which he put into our hands and told us to eat it.

What I would say to you in my closing comments is that the inner world is available to us; the beautiful spiritual beings on the inner world are available to us. We can call them. I know students who are Christian and who pray but have never called the Lord Jesus. I know students who practice Buddhist meditation who have never called the Lord Buddha. I want to say that it is my experience that one can call, ask, and you shall receive. That is my experience.

James Beichler: My orientation is probably a bit different than most of you since I come strictly from a scientific background. I am not a practitioner of ESP, remote viewing, clairvoyance; I've never seen a ghost nor a UFO for that matter although I'd like to see both. My background is in physics and the history and philosophy of science so I'm very grounded in science, yet at the same time, unlike other scientist I've never made a choice whether to believe in ESP. I always have. I also believe in PK, even though I've never demonstrated or seen anyone bend a spoon, yet I believe it and it's actually part of my background. I can never remember having made a conscious choice is this true or not. I'm not a skeptic. I wouldn't even say I'm a believer, it's just part of me that I've accepted as truth, I always have. I imagine probably the first time that I ever heard of something like ESP, it just sounded logical to me. That makes me different from the rest of science because even though I couldn't explain these things in science and that's my goal to explain them to science, that's what I'm trying to do, my sciences never have given me any skepticism about that. However, I am skeptical of many of the effects that people claim. I think some of them go overboard. They may be true or not, but that's where my skepticism comes because science is skeptical.

I have had some spontaneous events, mind reading, and telepathy. I have sat in a Buddhist foundation in Tetapori, Thailand. I just sort of wandered in there, and the head monk sat there through a nun translating to English. He sat there and I knew he was reading my mind and I wasn't told until two weeks later he was reading my mind. I felt a fuzzy cottony feeling and I'd think something and he'd ask me that question even through the English translator. I was one step distance from him in that matter. I had premonitions for a month once coming home from Europe that I was going to die on the way home so I didn't get the flight on one day and got it the next day. The flight I didn't get that one day blew up over Lockerbie, Scotland. I've always regretted that it was just a premonition that I was going to die on the way home. Had it been something more I would have phoned in a bomb report and gotten the plane grounded so they could have found the real bomb. I feel that's part of fate. I want you to know that my background is different, while I may be skeptical of individual events the overall field of parapsychology I am perfectly at ease with.

Frank White: I have a bit of a story to tell. The first time I went to college I was a good Christian boy and after about a couple of semesters I was a very skeptical Christian boy. Philosophy and psychology had made my young Christian philosophy seem not to stand up to the test of science. In a moment of desperation after months of

pondering the existence of God I went to a nearby chapel and knelt there and fervently prayed, saying I'm not getting up front this spot until I have a sign, something that says is there a God or isn't there a God? I sat there and waited and waited and waited. The anxiety and frustration grew and grew and the angst was almost unbearable. All of a sudden there was a flash of light. My eyes were closed but the flash went somewhere near the center of my forehead and by the time the light reached the peripheral part of my vision I had these words in my head. They were never spoken: "To feel this way is to know me, to not feel this way is to be without me." I realized there was something important here. It seemed to set the tempo of my life in so many ways. Things build up and the question becomes so difficult and the philosophy behind it becomes more unapproachable, untenable until there was a burst into another level of questioning; a deeper question which then resolved the former question. That's basically what I feel is happening still today in this conference for me. I come with a lot of individual experiences which I think of as spiritual intervention or spiritual emergence. I used to claim it as part of my personality, but in recent times I'm looking at it more as spiritual presence emerging through me as my consciousness of my ego becomes less restrictive. Here I'm in company of people who have been investigating psi phenomena and so many interesting and challenging subjects about the spiritual presence and the spiritual guidance in the world that I am very much stretched and my consciousness is shifting as I speak.

One last bit, with my wife with whom I've had very interesting family discussions, seeking professional help from a psychiatrist who is also my mentor; he is also the person who helped me with my project of psycho-spiritual integration, told me as we were discussing some of my needs to be not the identified patient but also the person who was right, but not the only one who had the problem in therapy. He said your wife came through a mother who had Rh factor and survived. He said it should be obvious to you that your wife is here through a great deal of willfulness and willfulness will be her way of being in this body this time. He said when you try to compete with her through your will, you will lose because you come from your heart. Do not try to imagine the world through the mind so much as work through your heart. My consciousness as I'm speaking wants to reach your consciousness through my heart and to let whatever experiences I have meld with yours at that level and see what spirit brings forth.

Don Rose: Friends, I want to say the couple days I've spent here I think all of us resent the fact that we have to go someplace; there are other things going on in our lives, but I have felt I'm in the right place. I didn't want to miss this starting with John's talk. Someone used the word rousing and I thought it a good way to describe his talk. From that point on, the valuable moments that I have enjoyed - your personality comes through to me, your humility and I can't wait to get your printed talks. I'll never forget Damaris singing and the coyotes howling around. I thought that Montague's talk was magnificent. That was a treat and worth our coming here for all of the time. I hope that I can contribute. Helen Keller said it would be such a joy to me if I could share something of Swedenborg with a world that is spiritually deaf and blind. I'm not going to accuse anyone of being deaf and blind, but it would be a great satisfaction to me to think that some of you might take something I gave you home and at some point read it and find something good and valuable. That would give me a great satisfaction. It's fun to be here.

Damaris Drewry: This is my first time with this group, my first exposure. My private observations are that this organization potentially has an ability to make a difference and I find it curious that it is so small and there are not many younger people in it. This boggles my mind as the subjects we've explored since we've been here are

fascinating and I'm sure of interest to a younger generation and I'm wondering why they're not here. I don't have an answer for that. I wonder how the organization will survive without that. A lot of thoughts have passed through my mind as I've been listening to everyone else and wondering what is the bigger picture. I still don't have a clear definition of what is religion in the context that everyone here has used it. Nor do I have a clear idea of what spiritual means to anyone who spoke, including myself. It's just an observation and thoughts here and there. Another observation is how snapped back into reality I was by listening to Montague. I appreciate the academic value of what he said and what he spoke about in terms of making a difference in the social paradigm. We are all here because we've all had personal paradigm shifts as a result of our experiences. We all have open minds or we wouldn't be here. One wonders whether it's important to try to make a difference in a social paradigm shift so that more belief systems can be acceptable and useful. Isn't that why we do research of any kind whether it be phenomenological or statistical, i.e., measurable, i.e., getting past the skeptics. We do this because a) we have a personal passion and b) because we want to make a difference, we want other people to know. Why we do that is simply to get our point of view out in the world and accepted or is it something else? Is it that that maybe we want to see pain eased, grief eased? Why do we do this? Another observation would be from my personal passion point of view which is that everything in this world is vibration, all there is is energy. The universal spectrum as we know it contains frequencies and our bodies are designed to interpret frequencies. That's how our senses work, sight, sound, touch, and smell, the brain interprets the molecular structure of the aroma that we are smelling. We have brains that are designed to interpret frequencies. Some individuals have a wider frequency band and interpretation than others. They are able to tune in more easily to certain tiny frequency bands where perhaps other individuals who are not in bodies are able to reach us. My point is that it seems to make more sense to look at that bigger picture of vibration and realize that of everything that is going on, our senses perceive a very small portion of what is actually happening around us. To be open to non-physical reality is to have a much richer life.

Montague Keen: I have to say that the last speaker who I greatly admire was in error when she said we are all here because of paradigm shifts that we've experienced. Paradigm shifts hadn't been invented in my youth and I'm not one who's ever experienced any paradigm shift, that is to say any rapid transformation in my belief system. I have to confess this is a slight elaboration of what I largely omitted in my biographical account an hour or so ago that I was raised as a theoretically orthodox Jew and nominally conforming. I rejected rather than abandoned my religious belief system at the age when most teenagers do when I was about 16 or 17. I gradually became what my then mentor, a very populist philosopher called C.E.N. Jode described as the positive side of agnosticism. That's to say one which clearly rejects atheism as I've always done if only on the grounds that it was intolerably arrogant intellectually, but which was unable to commit itself to any orthodox religious belief system but which held the door open, as it were. If I can mix my metaphors, of which I'm well experienced as a journalist, I have sat with my colleagues on the fence. The danger of sitting long on the fence, as Lord George once said of an opposition colleague, is that the iron begins to enter one's soul. The danger is that an inability to commit oneself, which is very typical of many parapsychologists, reflects the knowledge that immediately you do say I am absolutely convinced by this evidence therefore I am a believer, you are automatically stigmatized as a believer whose views are therefore distorted, whose research is subject to all the qualifications you would have as dismissing this as merely a rationalization of a belief system. Whereas, if you say I am a disbeliever, you're automatically relegated to the category of the skeptic who will not be moved. So it's much better to sit safely on the fence as a balanced person. I know when I joined the Society for Psychical Research

many years ago and I looked with awe at what the dedication of membership was which is to examine without presupposition, which means prejudice I suppose, all those faculties of man which appear not to conform with current accepted orthodox scientific views. Of course, this is as what someone pointed out earlier quite a myth because we can never discard our presuppositions; we always enter any sort of research burdened by those presuppositions. The trick is to recognize them and to discount them. Most of us don't even know and wouldn't recognize we have prejudices and would probably deny those beliefs as prejudices if they were pointed out to us. The area we are dealing with religion and psychical research is one which I think is inherently difficult and invariably controversial. Having said that I must say that throughout my life I have kept in touch if not been directly involved with research into psychical research until about 12 years ago when circumstances enabled me to pick up what I had to abandon many years before because I had to earn a living on various prosaic activities in the meantime. When that happened, I found that I had already become satisfied from the evidence of others, from my fairly extensive reading. To deny the existence of the soul was a piece of hypocrisy. I think one of my motivating interests in pursuing psychical research and devoting much of my old age to it is because not of any powerful religious feeling because I think I'm inherently non-religious rather than pure religious, not because I'm gifted spiritually because I don't think I am, but because I feel very strongly that the evidence which undermines the current paradigm of materialism and behaviorism is false. Those people who practice it and prevail upon the rest of the population to believe that they are scientists dedicated to the pursuit of truth and the abandonment of theories when those theories are inconsistent with the other theories are hypocrites because they refuse to look at the evidence. Much of my campaigning and most of my zeal tends to go into efforts to challenge the skeptics by thrusting under their noses evidence which is to my mind more and more persuasive. I'm engaged in this slightly frustrating but possibly rewarding activity at the moment.

John Rayner: Montague just told us that he sees himself different from the rest of the panel in that he's not experienced at paradigm shifts. I'd like to suggest that may be because he's already in the correct paradigm.

Don Rose: Montague, I thought I listened to every word of your talk today, but at one point you said until we storm or undermine that citadel we will not make progress. Now I asked myself, what was the citadel to which you're referring?

Montague Keen: The citadel was the citadel of behaviorism-materialism, which is the ruling belief system throughout universities, colleges and institutions in the western world, the existence of which acts as an inhibitor on many areas of research, not only in psychical research and many areas of unorthodox research because it implicitly suggests that unless something does conform to their paradigm or belief system of materialism that it must be disregarded, must be repudiated, it must be ignored and if it can't be ignored and repudiated, then it must be answered in some way. Usually if it can't be answered, it's ignored. This is something I feel strongly about and am campaigning against.

Harry Serio: Some of you have fought with the word religion and since this is The Academy of Religion and Psychical Research I thought perhaps we could get some dialogue on that. My understanding of religion coming from its root word *religio* is to tie back or to tie together, bringing all things together. It's the same cognate word that gave us words like *lex* for law and *lux* for light and so on. When we look at religion I think Montague especially set up a straw man in the sense that your view of religion is not a universal one. I think you were speaking mostly of one branch of religion and not all branches because there are many of us here that would probably agree with you even

though we are religionists as such. I'm also thinking of the fact we probably need to be more inclusive and recognize that while many of us are enlightened beings there are some with lesser degrees of enlightenment and that organized religion if you want to use this word and sometimes it's not very organized, but may be institutionalized is still a human institution made up of human failures and human inabilities but people are struggling on various degrees of spirituality to find truth. Some need greater help and look towards formal creeds and more fundamental approaches; others have grown beyond that. Nevertheless, it's like comparing first graders with post graduates. We're all in the same school, but we move at different levels of spirituality. I would make a plea that we recognize that there are different levels of growth, just as there are different ways of knowing. We talked about the empirical evidence. We also have talked about intuitive ways of knowing, Ouspensky's *Tertium Organum* recognized that we do move on different ways of approaching what knowledge is and the matter of faith is also a matter of having faith in the evidence. What is evidence to you may not be to someone else, especially when we're talking about psi phenomena, which is short lived. Most of it is not replicable; we can't reproduce a particular event consistently in the lab so we have to do it sometimes anecdotally and collect it that way. That leads back to what the tradition in religion would be that we have a biblical narrative. If we accept it verbatim, we're not doing justice to it. If we look for the truth behind the myth behind the tradition and renegotiate those passages for our own day we are still probing for ultimate truth. I'm not directing this necessarily to you but to anyone else who wants to comment on the role of religion in psychic phenomena.

Steven Hall: I would direct this to Montague with his last questioned statement as to the citadel of materialism and behaviorism. Would you also add institutional religion as a way to block the progress that would otherwise be made in this psychical research area?

Montague Keen: I rather hesitate to comment on that because I think that we have our work cut out dealing with the skeptics on one side rather than the believers on the other. Institutional religion is in a sense even stronger in some ways than the essentially evanescent doctrine of materialism which has been going for perhaps 250 years, not quite as long as institutional religion. I think you have to decide who your enemies are and pick them off one by one.

James Beichler: I tried to point out the other day when I gave my talk that religion isn't into the way of knowledge and science is based on reason and logic as a branch of philosophy and natural philosophy. I question the religion in Montague's statement probably pertains to western religion, psi phenomena or tied very closely to the void of knowing. That's more eastern, Hinduism, especially Buddhism and Taoism, the Chinese Taoist. It is an intuitive way of knowing reality. If you want to you can break this down to the bicameral brain, the right brain-left brain. One is more intuitive, spatially oriented, one is more logically oriented. There is a dichotomy. Through everything we have there is a duality, whether you want to call it wave particle duality in modern physics or whether you want to call it reason logic. If you've ever read Lawrence LeShan's book, *The Medium, the Mystic, the Physicist*, he has long lists. Other books have long lists of these dualities so religion does play a very important part in psi research, but it's at the intuitive mystic level and not at the institutional level. It's the institutional level, some not all the institutional, that is a block to psi research; let's say a fundamentalist level to some extent, if I can use that word.

Frank White: I've thought about this too. As part of my dissertation I ran into many people who felt they had been wounded by religion and had to resort to their

personal experience of the divine to participate. There was something in the fact that organized structure where they came from was limiting their psychological and spiritual expression. That's one thing. Later on I was reading something by Dwight Judy, who talked about where one finds the locus of authority and that's an important concept I believe in practical application of the terms religion and spirituality. If one is totally invested in the power of authority or the locus of authority in the institution that may mitigate or lessen one's ability to receive internal authority. When one looks at authority as turned inward through a personal experience of spirituality, then the locus of authority is with the individual and not with the institution.

Ruth Reinsel: I think this panel is the appropriate place for me to pose this question. I recognize that everybody here in this room is a seeker after truth. At what point does personal truth become public truth? In other words, we've heard presentations at this conference that some cases seem to be based on personal testimony of private experiences that scientists would probably just classify as anecdotal evidence as there's no corroboration of the experience. In another presentation last night there were statements derived from hypnotic regression that I personally would have to classify as pure fantasy, pure fantasy in Dr. Kumar's paper last night. My question for the panel is what are the criteria that a body like this that is an academy, what criteria do we place on testimony that can allow it to pass the tests of evidence for paranormal phenomena?

John Miller: I think it was somewhere around twelve years ago I addressed that question to the academy in a paper that was called, "Judging the Legitimacy of Our Physic Experiences". I laid out six criteria which could be used to judge the legitimacy of one's experience. In my address to the Academy this year I laid out experiences that I'd had. If my experiences had been utterly unique I would have good reason to think that I was crazy. However, since every one of my experiences was of a class that other people have had also, and it makes sense to say that if my experience fits other people's experience then that's a criterion for thinking the possibility is that they are veridical. Someone pointed out that what we call objectivity is actually our own subjectivity that is agreed upon. Your experience is what is in your consciousness, and my experience is what is in my consciousness. If we can agree that if there is corroboration or coherence in our consciousness, then we can say that what we experience is objective. Objective is in a sense agreed upon inner subjective experience. There are criteria that one can use for instance, when, if one is having an experience and if other people are having the same experience and report the same kind of thing, then that is corroboration. It's still subjective, but there would be corroboration. If other people then repeat that experience and have the same results, then that would be third criteria that one could use. Ultimately, as in science, there's got to be a world view or theory as it's called in science which makes sense of the experience and places it in a context.

Joe Seliber: I'd like to return to the issue of religions and institutions and it seems that there's a possibility and, in fact, a probability of a synthesis. I see this in the reform movements in many of our religious institutions. The gathering of people in a brotherhood/sisterhood opportunity one day a week or whatever has a very ameliorating effect on our personalities which we're not likely to give up in the near future. In generations to come as more and more information pervades our society and as time passes we may find that different individuals will have different needs based upon their progress in wisdom and different churches and synagogues to meet those needs with a slightly different doctrine a hundred years from now than we have today. I don't see the end of religion, I see a synthesis.

Don Morse: As president of the Academy and since I haven't spoken this week at all, I would like to use my presidential prerogative to tell two stories, one short and one long, both from the Journal that I'm editor of also and it's related to what Montague said. The first one is an atheist and Lock Ness monster. An atheist was spending a quiet day fishing when suddenly his boat was attacked by the Lock Ness monster. In one easy flip the beast tossed him in his boat high into the air. Then it opened its mouth to swallow both. As the man sailed head over heels, he cried out, "Oh my God, help me." At once the ferocious attack froze in place and as the atheist hung in mid-air a booming voice came down from the clouds, "I thought you didn't believe in me." "Come on, God, give me a break," the man pleaded, "two minutes ago I didn't believe in the Lock Ness monster either."

The second one somewhat longer and I think we'll enjoy even better. An atheist was walking through the woods admiring all that the accident of evolution had created. What majestic trees, what powerful rivers, what beautiful animals he said to himself. As he was walking alongside the river he heard a rustling in the bushes behind. As he turned to look he saw a seven foot grizzly bear charging towards him. He ran as fast as he could up the path. He looked over his shoulder and saw the bear was closing in on him. He tried to run even faster, so scared that the tears were coming to his eyes. He looked over his shoulder again and the bear was even closer. His heart was pumping frantically as he tried to run even faster, but he tripped and fell to the ground. He rolled over to pick himself up and saw the bear right on top of him raising his paw to kill him. At the instant that happened he cried out, "Oh my God." Just then time stopped, the bear froze, the forest was silent, the river even stopped flowing. A bright light shown upon the man and a voice came out of the sky, "You denied my existence all these years, taught others I don't exist and even credit my creation to a cosmic accident and now you expect me to help you out of this predicament? Am I to count you as a believer?" The atheist, ever prideful, looked into the light and said, "It would be rather hypocritical to ask me to be a Christian after all these years, but could you make the bear a Christian?" "Very well," said the voice. As the light went out, the river ran, the sounds of the forest continued, and the bear lowered his paw. The bear then brought both paws together, bowed his head and said, "Lord, I thank you for the food which I am about to receive."

Jo Revell: In my understanding of religion the purpose is empowerment. Part of empowerment is rising above the institutional fallacies and always part of our empowerment is rising about those limitations. I don't think we should discount the church, but rise and help it to grow.

Bill Alcorn: A couple lines of thought have been rattling around as I've listened to the panel. First, this is an unusual group of people for me to be in because most of the gatherings I'm in are almost all skeptics. They're educated people and the norm of educated people is to be skeptical, it's just a way of life. Most people I know you'd classify as skeptics. A roomful of non-skeptics is really unique. I've been thinking what is the difference between skeptics and let's say believers or non-skeptics? My mind turned to the Myers-Briggs Scale, which I got a lot out of after studying it a few years ago. I don't know if that's the answer and I'm going to put it to the panel. I think being a skeptic and being a non-skeptic are natural states. I'm not ready to say one is necessarily better than another and I'm wondering what else it correlates with. The thing I was thinking of on the Myers-Briggs Scale is the sensing versus the intuiting scale, but maybe not. The other line of thought is related. We all have certain ease or lack of ease in accessing the non-physical world. One of the metaphors which connects with Damaris is our brain is a radio and we tune into our own long term memories. We don't believe we carry them around in our head; we believe they're in the non-physical realm. We have

some ability to scan and get other people's memories. We've found this with other people we've talked to such as a husband and wife where one of them routinely picks up the dreams of the other. That's to us a clear case of scanning, getting to the right frequency. We have different abilities in this and that's something that we haven't learned along the way but is part of our nature like our ability to see or hear or taste. I'm not sure. That leads me to say that I don't think being a skeptic or non-skeptic is necessarily being enlightened or not enlightened or good or bad, but just different. I'd be interested in what the panel thinks of skepticism.

Montague Keen: I think the last one or the last two contributions relate to each other. Ruth Reinsel raised the issue of the canons of evidence, the criteria of acceptability for evidence of which we had a very learned comment on the right earlier on. What has now been raised is what is a skeptic and whether we are all to some extent skeptics. I think we all ought to be skeptics in the right sense of the term. Unfortunately, the word has been somewhat abused and taken over by the skeptics who are immobile or immovable, whereas a healthy doubt is the right attitude to approach novel evidence. A healthy doubt in the sense that it is not automatically rejected on the grounds that it is inconsistent with our belief system. I'm quite happy to be called a skeptic in that I look critically at the evidence before I accept it. Of course, the extent to which I accept it will be conditioned by one of the factors that was mentioned earlier. That is the extent I happened to know that this is precedence. If it's unprecedented then I'm much more likely to be extremely critical before I accept it. If I know this has happened many, many times before, then in a way my guard is down and I'm less likely to reject it automatically. This comes back to the question that Ruth raised earlier, the canons of evidence. Over the last five years I have been engaged in a somewhat itinerant correspondence with a person whom I greatly admire in some respects as being the most knowledgeable person I know in psychical research, Dr. Alan Gauld. We have corresponded on this very subject the canons of evidence because he contributed a lengthy critique of the report of the Scoll Group, which I referred to earlier. His critique raised the question of what is a legitimate criticism of evidence and what is not a legitimate criticism of evidence. This is a major and fundamental issue in science generally but in psychical research particularly. It's fundamental in the sense that until you can get agreement on the canons of evidence on acceptability of evidence you can't really progress. This is an area where there is a fundamental conflict. It's worth recalling the essay on miracles that was written some 250 years ago by Hume. David Hume's "Essay on Miracles" is always quoted as a justification for outright skepticism, though I think unfairly so. His criteria was that if a large enough number of well educated and well established people with the right sort of social position were to testify as to the accuracy of something that was exceptional he would be more inclined to view it even though it was something he was naturally disinclined to accept.

I mentioned earlier, for example, the number of witnesses of St. Joseph of Copertino's levitations in the middle of the 17th century. It happened over a period of many years, it happened before even the Pope himself and was extensively witnessed by all sorts of people, many of whom were extremely anxious to denounce him because he was a thorough nuisance. They could not effectively deny it. That evidence is pushed on one side by the skeptic. It was quite right for those people to be skeptical about it and they didn't have video cameras in those days. All they had was a number of private testaments from a large number of people. The question of what is acceptable and what is not acceptable is not black and white. There is no fine division. I think there is a gradation. If you have a ghost which is seen simultaneously by a number of people as distinct from the usual apparition which appears only to one person, do you give that more credence than a ghost which is purely subjective, which is a hallucination of one

person? If at the same time the ghost moves around and does things, perhaps moves things and that is witnessed by a number of people, do you elevate that to the standard of proof that you require? These are matters of judgment and opinion and I don't think that this could ever be quantified. It's a subject which has not been given sufficient detailed attention by psychical researchers generally and I'm glad it was raised here.

Damaris Drewry: I have a response also but quite different to your question regarding the skeptic-believer continuum. I suggest where one is on the skeptic-believer continuum is a function of what Frank said is your locus of authority whether it is within you or outside of you. I can only site one religion which would be the Catholic Church. It was originally to disempower the individual so that the individual would give power to the church and to the church's ability to intervene between the individual and God. I think that where one is on the skeptic-believer continuum is also a function of your personality profile. Now I'm speaking of research that's been done about people who have a tendency to disassociate easily would be more in the believer category than the skeptic category. Something that I will quote from Stuart Wilde, who is a metaphysician. He says our ability to evolve spiritually is dependent on our ability to give the collective unconscious the slip. In other words to step outside what everyone else's experience is, what everyone else's story is, and to be willing to accept experience which is unprecedented. I'm throwing these out as Devil's Advocate. I would consider myself to be an open minded skeptic, although anything I said yesterday may have given you some other impression.

John Rayner: Oddly, out of my own experience I'm in a position to make comments what Professor Beichler and Dr. White said on the panel today. The experience I'm talking about is my experience of coming to meditation and the particular way in which that happened was through Guru Maharishi. I'm sure many of you have heard that name before. In that connection I'm totally convinced I've proved in my own life that when the pupil is ready the teacher will appear. There was a series of coincidences which were totally convincing to myself and also it fits into the overall pattern of the statement, seek and you shall find. I believe that when Jesus said that he was speaking a very deep spiritual truth. I want to go beyond that with the connection with the flight over Lockerbie, the Pan Am flight. I heard Maharishi's brother had tried desperately to get onto that flight and no matter what he tried he could not get onto it. I have no reason to doubt that story is true. It suggests there was some power or influence which was controlling that situation. In connection with Dr. White I was somewhat startled to hear the nature of the revelation that was given to him in that Methodist chapel when he said he experienced the light that was some way associated with the brow and the third eye. In my initiation into meditation techniques and I'm sure a lot of you are aware of this, there are a number of techniques, which are essentially talking about points of concentration in practicing meditation. Three techniques were taught by Paramhansa Yogananda. In connection with Guru Maharishi in his tradition there is a fourth one. One which is shared by both is that of concentrating on an inner light and for those who practice this technique one does indeed see an inner light. You may explain that as you wish but I can tell you that when one does enter into that state of mediation to contemplate and concentrate on that inner light it is the most peaceful and restful and rejuvenating experience. What I find remarkable and validating is that in Dr. White's case he was given this revelation of what would appear to me when he was totally unaware of these things. To me this was validating that it was a spiritual experience but not necessarily or in his case evidently theologically based, but was a spiritual experience which came to him.

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From Spiritualism to Spirituality

The scientific quest to explain the psychical aspects of human nature

James E. Beichler, Ph.D.

Over the last century and a half, the successes of science in explaining our normally sensed world have led to further attempts to expand science into the realm of the para-normal and explain the para-normally sensed world of psychic phenomena. These attempts have helped to establish a greater and growing variety of psychical experiences as well as offer a real challenge to our traditional concepts of religious experience. Within this context, science first came into contact with the paranormal with modern spiritualism, then to parapsychology and finally to paraphysics and a new interest in consciousness and spirituality. At each stage of this evolutionary process, changes in the scientific attitude toward the paranormal coincide with changes in the evolution of attitudes in normal science as well as changes in religious attitude.

Science is a logical human endeavor through which we seek an understanding of the world and environment in which we exist. As such, the state of science at any given time is closely related to the level of advancement of our cultures and societies. On the other hand, religion is intuitive in its highest realization and explanation of our world and is often at odds with science which is based on reason. Science progresses by many methods, but science primarily progresses by its constant incursion into new realms of phenomena as perceived by humans, including phenomena sometimes considered occult or supernatural and occasionally religious. This progression raises questions concerning the reality and scientific legitimacy of certain humanly perceived phenomena and the extent to which they reflect real and verifiable phenomena in our commonly shared physical environment.

It is sometimes difficult to distinguish which phenomena are merely the result of our faulty or even biased perceptions of the world and which phenomena actually represent occurrences and events in that world. In many cases, science must shed light into the darkness and shadows of our misperceptions and subsequent misconceptions of the world, before it can progress. So science must precisely identify and define the quantities with which it must deal in our physical environment, both beyond and independent of our perceptions of the world, before it can proceed with its quest of explaining the world in which we live.

This was the case when a new element entered human culture during the first scientific revolution of the seventeenth century: Science successfully challenged religion as the main expression of human perception of our world. Many of the earliest successes of science were more about overcoming religious interpretations of nature, superstition

and religious scholasticism, than just carefully observing the world alone and this has promoted a bias in science, not always wrongly applied, against many types of phenomena dealing with the occult and psychical aspects of nature. The Scientific Revolution institutionalized a separation between mind and matter, and thus a separation between life and mechanism as well as spirituality and natural philosophy. This separation was part and parcel to Newtonianism, since the science that it was based upon reached its fullest development in Isaac Newton's *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica* of 1687. Therefore, 1687 can be regarded as the beginning of a new era of thought and attitude toward the psychical aspects of human nature, a 'pre-scientific era' of psychical research. It should be noted, however, that this 'pre-scientific era' of psychical science corresponds to the beginning of the scientific era for normal science. By its very nature, psychical science normally lags behind normal scientific advances.

Within the context of a developing science of psychical phenomena, other eras can also be delineated, in particular an 'early scientific era,' a 'middle scientific era,' and a 'late scientific era.' Each of these eras, or periods of scientific development of the psychical aspects of human nature, is marked by a redefinition of the varieties of psychical experience within the context of the scientific paradigms and attitudes of that era.

The Pre-Scientific Era (1687- 1849)

By carefully defining mass and deriving the correct laws of motion and gravitation, Newton distinguished between the realm of God and the realm of science, delegating the whole study of our physical world to science and reason. But Newtonianism did not offer the final answer to all of the phenomena in nature that humans perceive. For example, heat, energy, electricity, and magnetism fell outside of the original Newtonian worldview, as did life and mind, leaving them open to both scientific and non-scientific speculations. At the other extreme, Newton was forced by his critics to find a place for God in his overall scheme of the world. In this manner, Newton set a new standard for the interaction of science and religion as well as establishing boundaries for the evaluation and investigation of natural phenomena that had not yet been incorporated into the Newtonian worldview.

Newton separated the world into that of absolute space and time as opposed to relative space and time, the latter being the realm of scientific investigation. Although he did not explicitly compare mind to the absolute, Newton did associate God with the absolute in his famous "General Scholium" in the *Principia*.

He is not eternity and infinity, but eternal and infinite; he is not duration and space, but endures and is present. He endures forever, and is everywhere present; and, by existing always and everywhere, he constitutes duration and space. Since every particle of space is *always*, and every indivisible moment of duration is *everywhere*, certainly the Maker and Lord of all things cannot be *never* and *nowhere*. ... In him are all things contained and moved; yet neither affects the other; God suffers nothing from the motion of bodies; bodies find no resistance from the omnipresence of god. It is allowed by all that the Supreme God exists necessarily; and by the same necessity he exists *always* and *everywhere*. (Newton, 545)

For Newton, only the world of relative space and time was subject to scientific scrutiny.

The absolute could only be inferred since certain phenomena, such as centripetal acceleration in circular motion, could not be explained relative to any Euclidean point in space. The absolute must therefore exist to give such accelerations any mechanical validity. The same was true for God. God is everywhere and always. Material motion does not affect God in any way, nor does his presence offer resistance to material motion. The same characteristics were used to describe absolute space, but God was not equivalent to absolute space and time, they formed his Sensorium. God coexists with the physical absolute. Neither God nor the absolute space and time were prone to any scientific measurement, but were abstractions from our senses.

And so, instead of absolute places and motions, we use relative ones; and that without any inconvenience in common affairs; but in philosophical disquisitions, we ought to abstract from our sense, and consider things themselves, distinct from what are only sensible measures of them. For it may be that there is no body really at rest, to which the places and motions of others may be referred. (Newton, 8)

Although Newton thought of both God and absolute space and time as abstractions from our senses, it is also evident from these statements that Newton was also seeking a scientific validation of God as well as an unseen, scientifically motivated yet non-demonstrable (absolute) world. So, while Newton established science as the only way to directly know our world, he left room for both God, and many would conclude, the occult in between the two extremes of God and science. After all, Newton was not adverse to the occult. He was a practicing alchemist.

Newton's original work dealt with matter, motion, forces and momentum, yet these concepts were found lacking for a complete description of physical reality, even as they were used more successfully in the scientific description of nature. In the late 1700's, concepts of power and energy were developed and added to the Newtonian worldview. These new advances were made in conjunction with the industrial revolution and the development of the steam engine to run early industries. The physical concept of energy was eventually applied to describe the random motions of the hypothetical atoms and molecules that were thought to constitute gross material objects. This application allowed the use of Newtonian mechanics to explain heat, temperature and the states of matter themselves. In fact, by equating heat energy to mechanical energy during the 1840s, physics evolved out of natural philosophy with the birth of thermodynamics.

Other forces of nature, long ago considered occult or magical, also fell under the Newtonian influence. Both electricity and magnetism became viable subjects for scientific study with the rise of Newtonianism during the 1700s. The first natural laws governing these forces were modeled on the Newtonian world structure. Electricity and magnetism were first explored and explained as separate forces, but the more that science discovered about their characteristics and interactions with matter, the more science came to realize they were actually related, like two sides of the same coin. The development of the battery in 1800 as a simple source of electrical current allowed science to discover and understand the true nature of electricity and magnetism as different forms of the single electromagnetic field by the 1840s.

When these advances are taken into account, Newton's accomplishment begins to appear more like a program to determine and define what in nature was scientifically valid than a single scientific theory. Any phenomenon that could be explained within the Newtonian worldview was deemed scientific. Even a new form of religion, called 'theism,' was developed under the Newtonian banner during the 1700s. With new

advances in mathematics and methods of mathematical analysis, the Newtonian laws of nature became ever more accurate in describing all forms of mechanical motion, including what seemed to be the inner workings of the world. Newtonian science proved so accurate that God was not needed to intervene in the daily running of the universe. It was as if the universe was a gigantic Newtonian mechanical device, a clock, and God had only been necessary to design and initially wind the clock, and perhaps occasionally intervene to keep the mechanism running correctly. This view represented the 'clockwork' universe as well as the basis for the 'theism' religious movement.

Yet there still remained unsuspected gaps and holes in the Newtonian worldview, due in large part to the same separation of mind and matter that had been necessary at an earlier stage of the evolution of science. The separation of mind and matter had been crucial to guarantee the identification and definition of quantities which would eventually fall under the eye of science and this left room for occult concepts and ideas to exist at the far edge of the scientific world. Even Newton was something of a mystic through his alchemical researches, while society and culture in general could not abandon their occult trappings as easily as science could. Occult disciplines such as practical witchcraft remained, and perhaps even thrived, in those corners of society where science was slow to make inroads. The occult continued a tenuous coexistence with science during this period, even as science groped to bring the forces of electricity and magnetism into its fold. Both mind and life were outside of the Newtonian structure of the physical universe. Life seemed to be something extra, more than the living body that appeared to be just another Newtonian mechanism. Since the true nature of electricity and magnetism had not been discovered until the 1800s, these physical forces were equated to life and mind in the speculations of scientists, non-scientists and occultists during the middle to late 1700s.

Mesmerism was the best known of the occult practices to utilize electricity and magnetism, especially magnetism, as an occult force. Mesmerism first took root in Paris prior to the French Revolution. Mesmer tried to unify the early physics of magnetism with life by developing a concept of 'animal magnetism.' Mesmer made use of a common scientific method of explaining phenomena outside the realm of Newtonian mechanism in terms of a non-mechanical, unspecified and massless fluid. He then considered the possibility that an imbalance of his hypothetical fluid in the human body caused illnesses. Since his fluid was magnetic in nature, manipulations of the fluid in a sickened body by massage or by waving magnets over the body could heal a person's illnesses and diseases.

... and he especially extolled its application to medicine. Sickness, he maintained, resulted from an "obstacle" to the flow of the fluid through the body, which was analogous to a magnet. Individuals could control and reinforce the fluid's action by "mesmerizing" or massaging the body's "poles" and thereby overcoming the obstacle, inducing a "crisis," often in the form of convulsions, and restoring health or the "harmony" of man with nature. (Darnton, 3-4)

Other psychic phenomena, such as telepathy, were also observed within the practice of Mesmerism. Mesmerism eventually dissociated itself from the use of magnets and developed into a purely mental discipline before merging with phrenology and modern spiritualism. It could do no less than abandon its magnetic origins, since the science of electricity and magnetism was itself evolving, leaving less and less room for misconceptions and inaccuracies such as 'animal magnetism.' There were fewer unknowns for the Mesmerists to utilize for their own non-mechanistic, non-Newtonian

and growing non-scientific ends. Mesmerism was finally forced to shed its physical baggage by the advances of pure science and evolve into a new mental discipline, thus emphasizing other facets of its doctrine such as telepathy and strictly psychic phenomena.

Mary Shelley's Romantic novel *Frankenstein*, published in 1818, offers an example of the association between electricity and life. The Frankenstein monster was a mishmash of inanimate body parts stolen from different cadavers, made whole by Dr. Frankenstein, but still without life. The whole but lifeless body represented the Newtonian view of a living body, a mechanism that is the sum of its parts. But there was thought to be more to life than could be explained by the Newtonian view and the monster remained inanimate until the spark of life was given to it by nature, through lightning and electrical stimulation. The equating of life itself with something beyond Newtonian mechanisms, something extra-mechanical like electricity, was in itself important, and even though this example is an early work of science fiction, the ideas that it expresses were common during that time period.

Equating life to electricity only emphasized what little Newtonian science knew of both life and electricity. Life and electricity were closely associated during the 1700s under the names of 'animal electricity,' 'neuro-electric fluid' and 'bioelectrogenesis.' In the early 1780s, while conducting a series of experiments on bioelectrogenesis, Luigi Galvani discovered that an electric spark generated by the touch of his scalpel could activate the leg of a dead frog. This discovery eventually Alessandro Volta to develop the battery as a source of current electricity. A similar genesis preceded a true science of mind. Phrenology first evolved in the scientific vacuum of a science of mind, to fill a void in science regarding the very existence of the human mind. Science simply did not know how to approach the problem of the human mind.

The practice of phrenology was developed by Franz Joseph Gall during the 1790s, however it did not become popular until the 1820s and experienced its greatest popularity between the 1820s and 1840s. It then seemed to wither away in Britain during the 1850s. Phrenology was based upon several simple principles that seemed quite logical and scientific at the time: The brain is the seat of the mind; The mind has specific areas corresponding to specific functions, so corresponding 'organs' must exist in the brain; The size of these organs is a measure of the power of that particular function; The state of development of the organs determines the shape of the brain; And, the skull takes the shape of the brain, so determinations of the shape of the skull are an accurate index of the psychological aptitudes of an individual's mind. Phrenologists practiced manipulations of the skull since they believed that manipulation or stimulation of various areas of the skull could cause the development of "particular cerebral organs responsible for different intellectual aptitudes and character traits." (Wyhe, 1) While this practice faded from popularity after a few decades, some real scientific advances were made. Today, it is a commonly known fact in science that portions of the brain correspond to specific cerebral functions, a fact that was at least implied it not stated directly in phrenology.

The historical timing of the demise of both mesmerism and phrenology coincides quite well with the overall progress of physics and the various successes of the Newtonian system of science. So, it is safe to conclude that the beginning of a separation between superstition and scientific fact, due to the advent of the Newtonian worldview, occurred during the 'pre-scientific era.' During this time interval, general ideas about the paranormal and psychical aspects of human nature, which could be more properly and scientifically addressed when science itself had reached a higher level of sophistication, were beginning to develop.

The Early Scientific Era (1850-1930)

About 1850, the first rumblings of modern spiritualism were felt throughout the world. Eventually, this popular cultural movement became associated with scientific, semi-scientific and pseudo-scientific explanations of the psychical aspects of human nature. The movement was also religious, although it had nothing to do with establishment religions and their institutions. In this sense, spiritualism had some relationship to more modern ideas of spirituality. At least it dealt with the spirit of the common person, independent of any given religion or religious bias.

Many scholars believe that the modern spiritualism movement began in 1848, when mysterious rappings were heard in the Fox family cabin in Hydesville, New York. From these humble beginnings, the phenomena, attributed to the spirit of a murdered salesman, were popularized and their scope expanded during their spread from America to England and Europe. On the other hand, A.A. Walsh claimed that modern spiritualism originated in the lectures of J.S. Grimes on physiology of the nervous system and phrenology in Poughkeepsie, New York, in 1843. (Walsh, 168) Yet both of these views ignore earlier movements in spiritualism and philosophy that were common to the European cultural and intellectual heritage prior to the 1840's.

In his 1902 classic on the subject, *Modern Spiritualism*, Frank Podmore offered a more complex view of the evolution of modern spiritualism. He claimed that modern spiritualism was the outcome of two preexistent strains of belief which came together for the first time in America: The cult followings of Mesmer with his concept of 'animal magnetism' and "witchcraft and its associated phenomena." (Podmore, II, 347) "It was in America, however, where, as in England, the cult of Animal Magnetism had won but tardy recognition, that the spiritualistic interpretation found its most congenial soil, and attained its fullest development." (Podmore, II, 350) Podmore's view takes the social, religious and other aspects of spiritualism more fully into account than those accounts that seek to find the origins of modern spiritualism in a single event.

The new gospel appealed to the sympathies of men in diverse ways. To the idly curious, the mere brute appetite for the marvelous, it offered signs and wonders; to those whose curiosity was of a more instructed kind it held out hopes of new developments in science, a science which, starting from the physical, should mount up towards the spiritual; those who looked only for an earthly Utopia were dazzled with the promise of the speedy fulfillment of their dream; it offered consolation to the mourner; and to all some hope of light on the mystery of the universe. The movement was thus inspired, in its beginnings, with a genuine enthusiasm which may not unfitly, perhaps, be called religious. (Podmore, II, 351-2)

More importantly, Podmore correctly noted that the movement was lacking any relationship to a Supreme Being that was the hallmark of most other religions. (Podmore, II, 352) Modern spiritualism also owed some small debt to the Swedenborgians who based their beliefs on the spiritual writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. However, Swedenborg's spirituality dealt directly with his own radical interpretation of Christianity. In this manner, it differed from modern spiritualism which was not dependent on any single religious creed or upon a the belief in supreme being.

Modern spiritualism existed at the periphery, the outermost edge, of science, but that would make it no less a part of science during the late 19th century than electromagnetic theory or thermodynamics, both of which evolved during the same time frame. In the eyes of the spiritualists "spiritualism simply extended the range of the natural sciences into areas labeled supernatural, thereby 'converting supernatural into the natural'." (Barrow, 54) As the scientific movement encroached further upon the supernatural, older forms of spiritualism evolved and subsequently developed specific characteristics which distinguished modern spiritualism from its immediate predecessors in several ways: (1) It was more permanent than other movements (Podmore, I, 283); (2) Modern spiritualism dealt with the spirits of human deceased, whereas the "spiritual beings, ..., which by popular belief of the 17th and 18th centuries intervened in mortal affairs, were not human spirits (Podmore, I, 14; Also mentioned in Barrow, 5); (3) Modern spiritualism had a "propensity to generate sweeping statements about the nature of reality" (Barrow, 55); (4) The spiritual world was no longer separate from the living material world, but together they formed a single continuous world; And, (5) Modern Spiritualism was viewed by its adherents as a scientific movement, based on established science, *i.e.*, the Newtonian worldview.

The form of modern spiritualism that evolved in the latter half of the nineteenth-century was even more unique for its relationship to science, even though it may have been, at times, a laymen's perception of science rather than a true scientific version of science. In this way it was qualitatively different from the numerous types and forms of occult spiritualism that had previously haunted humankind and been at odds with science. Although some aspects of modern spiritualism were religious in the perspective of the common practitioners of the movement, while some adherents of the spiritualist doctrine saw the movement as socio-political and a substitute for traditional religions, the movement in modern spiritualism was also accepted as legitimate science by many well known and respected scientists. Many non-scientists also tried to find a scientific basis for modern spiritualism, thinking that they were doing so in the name of legitimate science. Scientists in England and Germany showed the greatest interest in modern spiritualism, while it remained a more common practice in America. (Wundt, 577-8)

The very fact that noted scientists developed an interest in modern spiritualism is a matter of historical importance and poses a dilemma for science, but the answer to this dilemma is not hard to find. Newtonian science had become so successful, had encroached so deeply into the realms of physical reality formerly claimed by religion and believers in the occult, that it finally became scientifically viable to face the scientific challenge posed by the existence of mind as well as the role of the human mind in our common physical reality. The first attempts of Newtonian science to deal with mind and its relationship to physical reality brought science into direct contact with the occult and true psychical experiences, at least until science could recast mind and psychical experiences in its own terms.

The evolution of modern spiritualism, especially in its scientific aspects, was not due to any failure of science to cope with the occult and religion, but it was instead due to the success of science in its expansion into previously questionable territories of human perception and thought. The historical fact that science first attacked the problem of mind indirectly, through spirit, rather than directly through a science of mind, is also easy to explain. The modern spiritualism movement coincided with the first attempts of science to define itself relative to the human mind, which was forced upon it by the theory of evolution as well as the recent successes of Newtonianism.

By the 1840s, when physics finally emerged from natural philosophy, the physical sciences of geology and chemistry had also developed to the point where they were ready

to emerge as separate systems within science. They also emerged as new scientific disciplines with their own methods, practices, set of questions and standards as well as relevance under the same Newtonian umbrella. Geology, in particular, had been influenced by Newtonianism. Geologists had determined that our earth had evolved over millions of years through a mechanism called 'uniformitarianism' as opposed to the Christian 'theory' that God created our earth several thousand years ago in the exact form and shape that we now find it. According to 'uniformitarianism,' the geological features of the earth were changed over thousands of millennia by slow mechanical processes such as erosion and uplift, yielding the present day geological structure and form of the earth.

In his 1859 book *The Origin of Species*, Charles Darwin, a geologist and adherent of this theory, applied this notion to the evolution of human beings through a process called 'natural selection.' Darwin's theory was directly opposed to the notion of 'teleological design' as implied in religion and predicted that the earth was at least a few hundred million years old. But Darwin's form of human evolution could not account for the evolution of the human mind, and, by extrapolation, it could not account for the mind (or spirit) after the death of the human body. If the human body was a Newtonian mechanism that had evolved through 'natural selection,' and life and mind were something extra for which Newtonianism and Darwinism could not account, then it was possible that the human spirit could survive death, which seemed no more than the cessation of mechanical activity. Neither Newtonian theory nor Darwinian evolution, nor any other form of accepted science, addressed this issue, so the question of survival of the mind and/or spirit remained open for the spiritualists to fill in the blanks as they saw fit. Newtonianism had found a place for God and religion by associating God with the absolute, but Darwinism challenged the last and only place that Newton had found for religion to coexist with science, one of religion's last philosophical strongholds, by demonstrating that humans had evolved, not been created.

So, a whole new variety of psychical experiences and phenomena, based on the possibility of survival of the spirit, came to characterize the modern spiritualism movement. Mediumship became a growth industry in America and Europe. What had begun as the rappings of a dead salesman in a small house in New York evolved into full-blown seances with grand appointments of flowers and falling rain inside the Victorian living rooms and studies of well known and respected scientists. Spirits made visible during seances oozed ectoplasm and other otherworldly forms of matter. In one famous incident, a well known and well studied medium by the name of D.D. Home floated out of the window in the home of an investigator and into the window of another room under the watchful eyes of a group of distinguished scientists. Acts of levitation were also reported in other cases. All of these phenomena were decidedly physical in character and quite flagrant and spectacular in practice, flying in the face of Newtonian science.

Few concrete scientific theories emerged to explain these new varieties of psychical phenomena, which seemed fairly impervious to explanation within the Newtonian paradigm. However, some hypotheses were developed to explain the reported phenomena. J.K.F. Zöllner, a German astrophysicist, thought that spirits existed in a fourth dimension of space, beyond our normal three-dimensional space of experience. He hoped to demonstrate both the existence of spirits and the fourth dimension in a long series of experiments with the American medium Henry Slade.

Slade performed tricks that defied normal logic and three-dimensional Newtonian physics. He could make chalk writing appear on subjects which he had no former knowledge, on slate boards closed and locked against any three-dimensional intrusion. He could also make wooden rings wrap around table legs without moving them over the ends of the legs, while the tables rested on the floor, as well as untie complicated knots sealed

inside boxes without any possibility of even touching the knots. All of these tricks were attributed to four-dimensional spirits according to the known scientific and mathematical characteristics of non-Euclidean geometries and hyperspatial systems that had been investigated over the previous two or three decades.

However, Slade was caught cheating on one occasion by investigating scientists and exposed as a charlatan, very nearly ruining Zöllner's scientific reputation and career. Many of the mediums of this era were found to be cheating at one time or another, so both the scientific and non-scientific critics of the practice of mediumship assumed that all mediums were fakes and charlatans, all of the time. At the end of the nineteenth century, no concrete evidence or proof that spirits or the soul survived the death of the human body and could communicate with the living was ever discovered. However, some cases of telepathy and other psychical phenomena were considered valid by some scientists. These discoveries, or rather lack of any real supportive discoveries, helped to set the stage for the next era of development.

Even so, there was enough support in the scientific community to warrant the development of professional organizations for the 'systematic investigation of this subject by science.' Scientific societies were formed to investigate these new phenomena while individual scientists weighed in with their opinions, pro and con, on the validity of the new varieties of psychical phenomena. The Society for Psychical Research (SPR) was the foremost of these organizations and the first to be formed. This organization was formed in 1882 by a group of British scientists including William F. Barrett, F.W.H. Myers, Henry Sidgwick, Lord Rayleigh, William Crookes, Sir Oliver Lodge and Alfred R. Wallace. The inclusion of Wallace in this group is especially significant since Wallace is considered a co-founder with Darwin of the theory of evolution.

Yet, in spite of the scientific stature and reputations of these men, the scientific establishment, in general, would not give the scientific investigation of the spiritualistic phenomena a fair hearing. Scholarly research and scientifically legitimate papers on psychical matters were shunned by the larger part of the scientific and academic communities. This was the primary reason why the SPR was formed. According to Wallace,

So strong was the feeling against the paper ("On some Phenomena associated with Abnormal Conditions of the Mind" (by W.F. Barrett) in official scientific circles at the time that even an abstract was refused publication in the *Report of the British Association*, and it was not until the Society for Psychical Research was founded that the paper was published, in the first volume of its *Proceedings*. It was the need of a scientific society to collect, sift and discuss and publish the evidence on behalf of such supernormal phenomena as Prof. Barrett described at the British Association that induced him to call a conference in London at the close of 1881, which led to the foundation of the Society for Psychical Research early in 1882. (Quoted in Marchand, 425)

It would seem from this statement that those scientists who appeared to control segments of the scientific establishment would 'a priori' discount spiritualistic phenomena, which would seem an unscientific position to take, but such a position regarding parapsychology is still taken by many scientists today. This does not imply that those scientists did not believe in the spiritual world. They could deny that the reported psychical phenomena had any scientific merit, while still keeping intact their personal beliefs of a separate spiritual (in a religious sense) world.

Other scientists, influenced by the same questions and cultural factors that gave rise to modern spiritualism and the SPR, approached the question of survival from a purely scientific and decidedly non-spiritualistic direction. In 1875, P.G. Tait and Balfour Stewart published *The Unseen Universe: or Physical Speculations on a Future State*. This particular work held a peculiar position with respect to the spiritualist movement. It was not a work on spiritualism, and had nothing to do with spiritualism, yet it so closely paralleled the attitudes of spiritualists that it could not be ignored. Yet the book was popular among many scientists who were openly anti-spiritualistic. It must be remembered that the movement of modern spiritualism dealt to some degree with attempts to put older forms of spiritualism on a scientific basis. Any work which was spiritualistic or shared common fundamental characteristics with spiritualism, while being authored by so widely known a scientist as Tait, deserved special attention. However, Tait and Stewart left it to no one's imagination that they were not spiritualists even if they did qualify their opposition to spiritualism. In this book, they argued for the survival of the human spirit after death of the human body upon strictly thermodynamical principles. They were clearly influenced the same desire to find a place for mind in science. Mind could not survive death of the mechanical body as spirit unless it was itself a real physical quantity before death.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, an American Society for Psychical Research (ASPR) was founded in 1884 by William James and other American scientists. James was not only interested in the human mind and consciousness, but telepathy and other psychic phenomena. His wide range of interests dealing with the human mind exemplified the suspected connections between these aspects of the human mind. In an attempt to explain telepathy, James developed the concept of 'subliminal perception.' Ironically, 'subliminal perception' has become a common element in modern psychology, but now has nothing to do with modern parapsychology in spite of its psychical roots. This may be due, in large part, to the fact that soon after psychology split from philosophy, as an independent science, it was given over to a different theoretical basis independent of any general concepts of consciousness. The concept of consciousness was relegated to an intellectual position behind another important aspect of the human mind, behavior.

The development of psychology as an independent science during this same era is not a coincidence, but further emphasizes the fact that science in general, and Newtonian science in particular, had evolved to the point where they could finally address the idea of mind. But Newtonian science had also evolved to the point where it could begin to question science itself, a subject, which paradoxically, is related to the development of the science of psychology. In science, and especially in physics, the human perception of nature and our physical environment had always been taken for granted as representing true physical reality, but that assumption also became suspect in the last decades of the nineteenth-century. In his book the *Science of Mechanics*, Ernst Mach made the first successful philosophical argument refuting the Newtonian concept of absolute space. He also criticized, quite severely, the use of non-Euclidean geometries and extra-dimensional spaces as a haven and home for spirits. (Mach, 1883, 589-590) Without naming Zöllner, Mach was certainly attacking Zöllner's work with mediums. The concept of non-Euclidean geometries was admittedly valid in mathematical speculations, but that did not mean that our common space was anything other than three-dimensional Euclidean, as commonly perceived. Yet some scientists were conducting astronomical observations with the hope of determining if space was non-Euclidean or Euclidean, so not all scientists agreed with Mach on the strictly *a priori* three-dimensional Euclidean nature of space.

Some scientists conducted theoretical research into the existence of a luminiferous aether that acted as the conveyer of electromagnetic fields and other scientists postulated that vortices in this aether were, in fact, the very atoms that make up matter. Mach argued that it was ridiculous to adopt such hypothetical concepts as physical realities since we could not really know physical reality, we could only know our sensations and perceptions of reality. (Mach, 1897, 41) Mach attempted to redefine the physical world we experience in terms of the sensations which our minds receive from the physical reality outside of our minds. Reality beyond our sensations was not legitimately questionable by science according to Mach, therefore speculations on concepts such as an 'Unseen Universe' and spiritualism were superfluous to science. Mach's philosophy offered an alternative solution to the dichotomy of mind and matter by circumventing the reality of the physical world thus destroying any possibility of an 'Unseen Universe,' yet his philosophy was a product of the same influences which were driving the spiritualists in their search for the 'Unseen Universe.' Mach was reacting to the temper of the time no less than were the spiritualists, Tait and Stewart, Zöllner, James and the members of the SPR, but he chose to interpret the synthesis of mind and matter in a different manner than the spiritualists and many other scientists.

Two of Mach's contemporaries, J.B. Stallo and Karl Pearson, shared strikingly similar views of science with Mach. If we were to ask Mach, Stallo and Pearson what constituted science, they would all agree that science deals with the sensations or sense impressions that humanity as a whole derives from the physical world in which it exists. The sensations are grouped, categorized, abstracted and conceptualized in the simplest or most economical terms to give us Natural Laws. But these Natural Laws are products of our minds and cannot be imposed on the physical world since we are limited by our sensing faculties in our knowledge of the physical world. In this way, these three men, and especially Mach, differed from Tait and Stewart who sought to set up Natural Laws as independent of man's mind in a universe which had both sensible (material and physical) and unsensible (spiritual) components.

Obviously, not everyone thought of mind as something separate from physical reality or just an interpreter of physical reality, as did Mach. But all scientists were beginning to recognize importance and necessity or understanding the interactions of mind with the world. Mind was now recognized as a player in the game of reality which was described by science, rather than a separate observer or spectator of the game. Science needed to find the place of mind within its ranks instead of ignoring mind as prescribed by the old Newtonian dictum of a separation of mind and matter. These various opinions offer further evidence that Newtonian science had at last progressed far enough, been successful enough, to tackle the subject of the human mind, and out of this philosophical introspection, psychology evolved. But the direction that psychology, the new science of the mind, took was different from what would have been expected. Another scientific revolution was under way and the varieties of psychical research were about to change once again.

In far more concrete rather than philosophical ways, the successes of the Newtonian worldview opened the floodgates for the downfall of the Newtonian worldview. The Newtonian worldview was notoriously deterministic in its mechanisms. Given the position and velocity of all material particles in a system, or even the universe as a whole, the complete future of that system, or the universe, could be predicted or determined. But the new electromagnetic theory, originally based upon Newtonian principles, gave different predictions than Newtonian mechanics for phenomena involving the interaction of light waves and material bodies. This discontinuity in the theoretical basis of physical reality posed a serious problem for science and the solution to this looming crisis came in

the form of a Second Scientific Revolution which changed the primary worldview from determinism to indeterminism.

Both relativity theory and quantum theory were originally developed to account for discrepancies between electromagnetism and Newtonian mechanics. Yet each took a new life and evolved in unexpected directions that put them at odds with the Newtonian worldview. Relativity theory (special relativity in 1905 and general relativity in 1916) rendered absolute space and time irrelevant in science. Relativity changed the basic framework of physical reality from a three-dimensional space and with a separate time to a four-dimensional space-time continuum. On the other hand, quantum theory introduced the concept of indeterminism in science.

Fifty years earlier, statistics was adopted in physics to determine the macroscopic effects (heat and temperature) of large numbers of randomly moving atoms and molecules in a gas. Statistics was only used because we could not measure or otherwise know the individual motions of all of the atoms at the same time in a material body, so science worked with their statistical averages. This development was well within the Newtonian worldview. However, quantum theory institutionalized randomness and indeterminism into the very fabric of physical reality, at the sub-atomic level. The problem was not the technological inability to measure the positions and velocities of sub-atomic particles, instead it was deemed impossible to do so under any circumstances by the very indeterministic nature of physical reality. It took nearly three decades, from 1900 to 1927, for science to come to the complete realization of this subtle and fundamental change in our concept of physical reality and the basic tenets of the quantum theory. In the meantime, a social upheaval of world wide proportions, in the form of World War I, also occurred, changing the cultural underpinnings of society.

During this period, from 1900 to about 1930, modern spiritualism declined as a popular social movement. It seems as if the magnificence, in the form of the grand physical effects of mediumship, went out of the practice. In actuality, the study of the psychical aspects of the human mind were slowly reacting to the changing socio-political and scientific changes. As Podmore noted in 1902, the emphasis of psychical research changed to the mental aspects of telepathy, clairvoyance and precognition. No real convincing evidence, other than anecdotal evidence which is always suspect, for survival and communication with the spirits of the dead ever materialized.

William James' concept of psychology, a true science of the mind, based on the existence of the mind itself in the form of a study of human consciousness, also evaporated. The new science of psychology was based instead upon behaviorism. It is very likely that Mach's view that natural laws were built on sensations and perceptions of the world, rather than the mind which was perceiving or reacting to the sensations, swayed the early development of psychology toward behaviorism rather than consciousness. Mach's ideas were adopted by the positivist school of philosophy, which was very powerful and influential in science during the early and middle portions of twentieth century. And, more to the point, statistics became an important tool in modeling behavior, as physical reality was found to be probabilistic at the level of the quantum. By 1927, the original phase of development of quantum theory was completed. Quantum theory and its philosophical basis of indeterminism had come to dominate physics at the expense of both Newtonian physics and the relativity theory, both of which are deterministic. So, by default, the quantum worldview of indeterminism became the dominant worldview for science as a whole.

The Middle Scientific Era (1930-1969)

The next four decades of psychical research can be summarized in a single word, parapsychology, and associated with the name of one single scientist, J. B. Rhine. No other scientist or scholar was as influential as Rhine on the future course of the scientific study of psychical phenomena and no other scientist did as much to define the discipline of parapsychology. Rhine was invited to Duke University in North Carolina in the early 1930s. At Duke, he began a long and illustrious career in the field of parapsychology, as psychical studies came to be called, by conducting simple laboratory experiments in ESP and the other mental aspects of the psychical or paranormal. In this manner, Rhine quietly brought psychical studies out of the parlors of practitioners and supporting scientists and into the laboratory where they could be isolated and studied under controlled conditions, conforming to the norm for the rest of science.

The early experiments were conducted with Zener cards, a deck of twenty-five cards with five different symbols: A star, circle cross, square or wavy lines. One person would turn a card over and another person would try to read or identify the card through the senders thoughts. Probability would dictate a one in five chance of correctly reading the card from the sender, so these simple experiments were analyzed statistically. Statistics therefore became an important tool for the parapsychologist. Over hundreds and thousands of attempts to read the senders' thoughts, a very slight variation from the statistical norm would indicate the very subtle influence of extrasensory perception (ESP). So, scientists no longer looked for the spectacular results of mediums and other psychics which were non-repeatable under laboratory conditions, but rather for very subtle influences which were statistically significant and hopefully repeatable when others conducted the same experiment under the exact same conditions. Unfortunately, too many other unknown factors affected the outcomes of the experiments and they were not always repeatable. This change marked a certain maturing of the science of psychical research, but it also made obtaining proof of the phenomena that much more difficult.

Problems with the experimental procedures were quickly identified by skeptics and critics. Over the next six or seven decades there seemed to be a race between the parapsychologists and the skeptics, during which the parapsychologists fine-tuned their experiments again and again as the skeptics made more stringent demands on the parapsychologists' experimental methods to forestall any possibility of fraud or deceit. The end product of this cat-and-mouse game was far more comprehensive and exacting experimental methods and mathematical analysis than any other field in psychology. Many scholars and scientists have stated that if normal psychology were expected to follow as strict a methodology as parapsychology, many if not all of the theories of normal psychology would need to be discarded. Yet parapsychology has suffered from undue bias and outright prejudice within the scientific community. It has been held up to standards that no other science has had to contend with, and has actually gained strength from these standards.

These various experiments have forced parapsychology to carefully define its limits and the scope of the discipline. In 1946, R.H. Thouless and W.P. Weisner conducted a series of experiments that forced them to conclude that a single agent was behind all of the known ESP and PK effects. They named this agent 'psi.' So, rather than speak of paranormal or psychical phenomena, it is more appropriate to speak of psi phenomena or a psi effect. The various phenomena that parapsychologists and other scientists now recognize and investigate are commonly categorized into two separate groups: ESP

(extrasensory perception) and PK (psychokinesis) phenomena. According to the SPR, the field of study of parapsychology includes more than just ESP and PK, or more than normal psi phenomena.

The principle areas of study of psychical research concerns exchanges between minds, or between minds and the environment, which are not dealt with by current orthodox science. This is a large area, incorporating such topics as extrasensory perception (telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition and retrocognition), psychokinesis (paranormal effects on physical objects, including poltergeist phenomena), near-death and out-of-the-body experiences, apparitions, hauntings, hypnotic regression and paranormal healing. One of the Society's aims has been to examine the question of whether we survive bodily death, by evaluating the evidence provided by mediumship, apparitions of the dead and reincarnation studies. (SPR, 1)

This SPR list represents nearly the whole range and scope of the modern variety of psychical experiences, as exhibited or experienced in the laboratory and society in general. Parapsychology, as a lab science, deals more with the ESP and PK phenomena which can be tested under laboratory conditions, but parapsychologists still conduct field investigations and collect anecdotal evidence for the other forms of psychical phenomena listed.

The lack of repeatability of the experiments is the major concern that has evolved with the science of parapsychology. Whether evidence of psi is collected in the laboratory under stringent conditions or in the field with no control of the conditions, the repeatability of data gathering under the same circumstances, a requirement of all scientific studies, has been the hardest problem to overcome. Not knowing what psi is, and not having any theoretical basis for testing psi, experiments that limit and control the variables that influence psi effects have not been developed with any accuracy. In a sense, scientists are shooting in the dark without a theory or working hypothesis to act as a light and guide them through the darkness. Valid information is hard to obtain under these conditions, so parapsychology has experienced a very slow but steady growth during the middle-scientific era.

In spite of these and other shortcomings, some properties of psi have been identified and theories proposed. Early explanations of the phenomena made simple comparisons between radios and telepathy. The author Upton Sinclair popularized the idea of a *Mental Radio* in 1930 in a book of the same title. Sinclair's book presented a popular description of experiments that he had conducted and included an introduction by Albert Einstein. In 1927, J.W. Dunne based a theory loosely on special relativity, utilizing a relativistic fourth-dimensional time that was itself two-dimensional. In 1967, C.D. Broad proposed a similar theory. It was also based on a second dimension of time, but lacked Dunne's infinite regress of higher time dimensions. Many other theories were proposed, but no 'theories' went beyond the stage of merely proposing the hypotheses, i.e., none of these 'theories,' if they can generously be called 'theories,' led to experimental verification of the hypotheses they were based upon.

In many cases, new unknown quantities were proposed to explain the unknown psi. Wasserman developed a system of four new physical fields to explain psi. These were the p-field, M-field, B-field and the psi-field. William G. Roll borrowed from Wasserman's ideas and developed his own brand of a psi-field, halfway between Wasserman's psi and p-fields. Roll's psi-field was defined as "the region in space in which psi phenomena are detectable." (Roll, 1966, 47) His psi-fields were associated with both animate and

inanimate bits of matter. H.A.C. Dobbs' proposed a theory of psi-trons as a 'quasi-physical' field theory in 1965. In all of these attempts, and many other such examples which go unmentioned, non-physicists were attempting to do theoretical physics and were doing it badly. It is not really considered proper in physics to propose new unknowns to explain another unknown. The correct procedure is to explain phenomena within the context of the present paradigm of science, or, at the very least, to find a mechanism or model that somehow associates the unknown agent with known variables or theoretical concepts.

Some of the theories, such as Dunne's theory, followed this procedure, but it was limited as were all of the theories of this era. As a rule, physical theories of this era were developed by non-physicists and only dealt with a single facet of psi. No general theories of psi were developed that could even come close to attempting a general explanation of all the various types and forms of psi phenomena. So, while these theories are historically interesting, they do not help in explaining psi or the different recognized and accepted varieties of psychical experience.

Yet these theories closely followed the developments in normal science during the same period of time. After the 1927 Solvay conference, quantum theory dominated physics and its philosophical basis came to influence all of the other sciences as well as culture in general. Relativity theory fell into a background role in science as a correction to Newtonian physics at its extremes of very high speeds and extremely dense gravitational fields. In other words, there were no practical applications of relativity, so it languished. On the other hand, quantum theory explained the atom and the atomic nucleus and, with the development of nuclear physics, was highly applicable in situations ranging from nuclear bombs and nuclear energy to nuclear medicine. Yet there remained a philosophical if not a practical chasm between the fields of scientific thought as exemplified by quantum theory and relativity. The quantum represented the discrete nature of reality and relativity represented the continuous nature of reality, two mutually incompatible concepts.

During the 1930s, Einstein and a few colleagues who accepted his philosophical views on the subject argued that quantum theory was 'incomplete' by its very nature and physical reality could not be completely described or accessed by the quantum viewpoint. Einstein thought that an independent physical reality existed underneath the quantum reality, a sub-stratum below the indeterministic limits placed on our understanding of physical reality by the quantum view of nature. These philosophical arguments were not resolved, and many times not even addressed, until the 1970s, and even then not to the satisfaction of all scholars and scientists.

Similar related arguments dominated parapsychology of the era, and still have not been resolved. Some parapsychologists, scholars and scientists thought that psi is a purely mental construct which is not, and cannot be, reducible to physical quantities, models or theories. Psi, like mind, is discrete and separate from matter. Others thought that psi was indeed a physical concept open to experimentation and theoretical explanation by the physical laws of nature. In other words, psi, like mind, is continuous, not separate, from matter and the material world at some fundamental level of physical reality. The opinions of other scientists resided somewhere between these two schools of thought. Meanwhile, theoretical work on psi has followed these schools of thought as well as changes in the normal physics of the time period.

Dunne's imaginary time was physical-like, but not physical or material. So Dunne's theory would seem to be a mental theory couched in physical terms. The mental radio and similar theories view the mind as a complicated electro-mechanical device and psi as an electromagnetic phenomenon. So mental radio theories of this type were physical, not just

expressed in physical terms. Some of the field theories of psi were based upon real hypothetical physical fields of the same type as gravity or magnetism, just as some of the particle theories used physical and matter-like particles that could affect real matter and classical physical fields. But some of the particle theories relied on a concept of mental particles which were neither physical nor material. So, the meager number of theories of psi and/or psychical phenomena that emerged during the middle scientific era split along two separate lines: The line between the discrete and continuous as represented by the quantum and field, respectively, or the line between mental and physical. The theories mentioned above represent only a sample of the total number of theories suggested, but the overall number of theories still remained small. However, no experimental evidence that could distinguish between these theories was ever produced and no synthesis of these opposites was ever proposed. Yet experimental work continued along the lines, methodologies and standards developed by Rhine and his colleagues.

Rhine retired from Duke University in 1965, but his work continues. The Rhine Laboratory and its research were transferred to a privately funded group, the Foundation for Research on the Nature of Man, in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. The field of parapsychology has grown, but ever so slowly. An international scientific society, the Parapsychological Association (PA), was formed in 1957. Similar organizations have formed around the world, but they are small and do not yet rival the professional organizations representing other sciences. However, they do publish articles in peer reviewed journals. A few courses in parapsychology were developed independently at universities in America and elsewhere, but no specific educational programs in parapsychology have been successfully developed, and research grants and other sources of funding are difficult if not impossible to find. So parapsychology does not yet have the same stature as other sciences. However, the PA was granted affiliation with the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the umbrella organization for professional scientific societies in America, in 1969. Parapsychology sessions at annual AAAS meetings have become a forum for parapsychologists to offer research papers to the scientific community in general and serve as a platform for debate. Membership in the AAAS has given parapsychology a small amount of legitimacy such as it has never before had, but the discipline is only growing and advancing slowly, waiting for a breakthrough discovery to 'prove' the existence of psi.

The middle scientific era was characterized by the development of parapsychology, a real science whose purpose is to explore the variety of psychical experiences. Scientists have observed, identified and defined the quantities associated with psychical phenomena, and attempted to measure them, but the primary quantity of psi is difficult to isolate in the laboratory. Scientists have had to rely on statistical methods to *imply* the existence of psi in the laboratory and the discipline as a whole suffers from the lack of repeatability in its experimental procedures, among other problems. Over the course of years and decades, Rhine and other parapsychologists have concluded that their experiments confirm the existence of psi such that the variations they measure from norm can not be attributed to random fluctuations from chance, although this last point is denied by skeptics and many conservative scientists who still refuse to accept the reality of psi in any form. In spite of the lack of a spectacular discovery or other breakthrough, experimental procedures have been further developed and refined by the constant challenges and criticisms of the numerous skeptics, while a group of methodologies and standards for parapsychological research were established for future use in parapsychological research. Parapsychology, although a small science, is a healthy and growing science, and a larger variety of psychical experiences are slowly making their way toward scientific confirmation.

The Late Scientific Era (1970-Present)

The 1970s began with radical changes in both the varieties of psychical experience and scientific attitudes toward the physical basis of reality, setting the stage for the next significant stage in psi research. In the early days of the decade, several physicists, physical scientists and other scientists joined the search for psi. The fact that physicists joined is significant since only two physicists had worked as parapsychologists in the preceding four decades. The influx of these scientists brought new and fresh ideas to the field, defined new types of phenomena and encouraged a new theoretical emphasis to complement the work concluded in the previous decades.

One major change in parapsychology came with Hal Puthoff, Russell Targ and Ingo Swan's program in 'remote viewing' at Stanford Research Institute. Although the phenomenon of 'remote viewing' was not new (the new name was suggested by Swan), it had never been utilized in the manner proposed. The program at SRI developed into a secretly funded research effort for spying on the Iron Curtain countries during the Cold War. In a sense, the U.S. government indirectly confirmed the validity of psychical phenomena by developing the program in remote viewing. But this was not the only introduction of a new variety of psychical experience during the 1970s.

At nearly the same time, Raymond Moody discovered and investigated what he termed near death experiences (NDEs). His popular book on the subject opened whole new chapters in the field of parapsychology, the psychology of death and the scientific search for answers regarding death and survival. These additions to the field of parapsychology reflected an overall adjustment of attitude and a new tolerance within both science and human culture for new ideas about the survival of death. Death and survival were finally moving beyond their purely religious connotations into mainstream science. Science could no longer escape or ignore the question of death, which had now come back, in verifiable incidents, to haunt it.

These and other changes were not the result of, but rather part of, a unique confluence of ideas, concepts, events and long trends in science that were just beginning to gel. Within the overall context of our human culture, a new wave of Eastern philosophies were advancing throughout the Western world. The Eastern philosophies brought new ideas on consciousness and reincarnation with them. Several popular books appeared comparing the Eastern philosophies to modern physics rendering the philosophies more familiar, but their emphasis on consciousness and methods of raising consciousness to a higher level were something new for science to consider. Consciousness was making a comeback as a legitimate scientific concept, not only in psychology and the popular culture of science, but also within physics itself. These changes were indirectly bolstered by the U.S. space program. Recent successes in the space program became a constant reminder that humans are only a small part of a greater universe to which they belong. The space program began to humble a sometimes egotistical human race.

The Scientific Revolution began in the 1540s when Copernicus challenged the dominant geocentric system of the universe. He began the human quest for new knowledge by proposing a heliocentric system for the universe. Earth was dethroned from its special central position in the universe, but the human race still remained the egocentric hub of the universe. Humans have believed that they are the center of the universe for centuries. When we first saw pictures from the moon of our small green and

blue planet, a very fragile planet, adrift in a much larger universe, part of the human egocentricity fell away. The special connection between individual humans, different societies, cultures, creeds and races, as well as the rest of the universe, were realized, in many cases, for the first time.

In physics, cracks in the quantum domination of science were also beginning to appear. David Bohm had proposed a change in the philosophical basis of quantum theory in the early 1950s. In order to better explain Einstein's view of another level of reality below the quantum limit, Bohm introduced the concept of 'hidden variables.' Bohm's work represented a rehabilitation of Einstein's philosophical views of quantum theory. But Bohm's concepts also became a new factor in the development of quantum theory itself. Bohm's theoretical research continued and he developed a new and alternative interpretation of quantum mechanics with the concept of a 'quantum potential field.' And finally, Bohm developed the concept of a 'holographic universe.' The holographic universe model was also suggested by Karl Pribram who had noted that human memory seemed to act in a holographic manner. Again, a new and important connection between mind and physics emerged.

During the 1960s, advances in technology and the space program rendered general relativity relevant to the overall development of science. By the 1970s, Einstein's theoretical work had been vindicated as more than just a correction factor to Newtonian physics. The new emphasis on general relativity was a direct challenge to the quantum and indeterministic view of reality. Quantum theorists could no longer ignore the fact that general relativity offered a different and yet valid view of physical reality. So, by the 1980s, scientists were willing to admit that the unification of quantum theory and relativity, as Einstein had attempted, was desirable, and the search for a TOE, a theory of everything, was engaged. The first suspected TOE, developed in the 1980s, was called supergravity, but the theory failed. The next attempted TOE, in the 1990s, was called superstring theory, but that theory has now evolved into something called M-theory. It has now been suggested that our universe is a four-dimensional brane (membrane) curved in a fifth dimension. (Hawking, 180-184)

Unfortunately, the search for a TOE has followed along the lines of quantifying the continuous gravitational field, changing continuous space-time into small discrete lumps of space-time. Yet Einstein's approach was made from the opposite direction. Einstein felt that unification would be based upon the concept of the continuous field, with the discrete quantum emerging from the field itself. Einstein may well have been correct, because the M-theory is beginning to look more like Einstein's five-dimensional unified field theory. The significance of this change of temperament within the physics community can be found in the very notion of a 'theory of everything' itself. By its very definition, a 'theory of everything' must account for everything, including life, mind, consciousness and psi. So the scientific community seems to be setting itself up for a new change in attitude regarding the search for a theory of psi.

Physics also seems to be approaching the question of psi from yet another direction. In the extreme philosophical interpretation of quantum mechanics, it has long been believed that consciousness is necessary to collapse the wave function or otherwise distinguish between the infinite number of possible quantum states out of which every single physical event evolves. This interpretation introduced consciousness into physics as a basic element of physical reality, and out of the realization of this fact the new field of 'physics of consciousness' has emerged.

New experiments during the 1980s, designed to test Einstein's original arguments that quantum theory is incomplete, demonstrated that quantum mechanics was valid non-locally as well as locally. In other words, a forced change of a quantum mechanical

system at one location in space caused an automatic reciprocal change at a far distant location in space that would have been thought impossible because there is no apparent physical connection between the two events at vastly separated locations. If one and one can be put together to get two, then we can put together the fact the consciousness is required to 'collapse the wave packet' in the quantum world, and the quantum can act non-locally, to conclude that consciousness can act non-locally. The prediction that consciousness can act non-locally across space and time is quite close to what the parapsychologists call psi, at least it is an adequate physical description of what the action of psi accomplishes. So it would seem that quantum theory implies the reality of psi.

While many scientist may argue with this interpretation, the new area of study called the physics of consciousness is presently attracting many scientists who would otherwise not enter the field of parapsychology or parapsysics, and the study of psi is a valid endeavor within the study of consciousness. Consciousness studies now offer a safe haven for parapsychologists and parapsycists to talk about paranormal phenomena, as well as a safe haven for physicists to talk about paranormal subjects without really mentioning the paranormal and incurring the wrath of their colleagues and skeptics. Many scientists have already adopted the terms anomalies and anomalous phenomena to replace paranormal and psi phenomena since they are emotionally neutral terms which do not so readily invoke the displeasure of their colleagues.

Other purely technological advances have also introduced new varieties of psychical experience. Modern tape recording and other recording devices have been used to detect and record strange voices and noises. These are called electronic voice phenomena (EVPs). The EVPs are usually associated with hauntings, but no conclusive evidence has been offered on the actual origins of the recorded noises. New photographic techniques, including thermal imaging, are being widely used in field investigations of paranormal events. These new techniques and technologies are offering new data to the ever growing evidence that something strange is happening during haunting investigations, if not evidence for survival. Parapsychologists and investigators no longer have to rely on anecdotal evidence alone. The new technologies allow empirical data to be collected at haunting sites and other types of field investigation sites.

However, another new technological advance is far more significant for the study of psi: The development of computer technologies. PK events of the past had always been spectacular and highly suspect for fraud. PK events such as poltergeist activity had also been spontaneous, and thus difficult to study in a scientific manner. But the use of computers has produced a whole new variety of PK events which are measurable in the laboratory. Psi can be used to affect the outcome of random number generators (RNGs). This form of psi action is called micro-PK, as opposed to the traditional form of PK which is now called macro-PK. Experiments involving micro-PK and RNGs can be controlled under laboratory conditions, so micro-PK has been added to the variety of psychical experiences testable in the laboratory in the last few decades, supplying another source of data for the investigation of psi.

So, by the 1990s, significant changes in the scientific attitude toward psychical experiences were in the works, forced upon science by many different advances. Some scientists are finally becoming aware of this change, even if that awareness is reluctant. However, several significant experimental advances have also occurred in the 1990s that are beginning to change the overall equation of psi research. In particular, the constant harassment of skeptics reached a new level when they challenged parapsychologists to conduct a statistical analysis of all experimental results related to psi over the past five decades. However, they required that all of the negative results for the existence of psi that had been neglected or discarded in the past studies, now be added into the study.

Such a study was undertaken by Jessica Utts with a startling outcome. The new statistical analysis, called a meta-analysis, has shown beyond a reasonable statistical shadow of doubt that some unknown process that cannot be accounted for by normal statistical variations has occurred in the experiments. It would therefore seem, and some previously skeptical scientists now agree, that the statistical evidence supports the action of psi in past ESP experiments. This result represents a significant advance for parapsychology.

In the late 1970s, Robert Jahn and Brenda Dunne established the Princeton Engineering Anomalies Research (PEAR) laboratory to study the direct effect of mind on mechanisms. In other words, the PEAR group studies the effects of micro-PK. Jahn and Dunne have come to the conclusion, after two decades of research, that there is a small but significant effect of mind on mechanisms that cannot be accounted for as a statistical anomaly. So, it would now seem that there is substantial evidence for micro-PK.

Dean Radin conducted a series of experiments in the early 1990s to test for an effect he calls pre-sentiment, which is a low level precognitive effect. Radin's experiments clearly indicate that the subjects he tested demonstrated physiological changes corresponding to fear and other emotions, before they were shown pictures to evoke those same emotional responses. Radin's experiments therefore indicate the existence of subconscious precognition, or pre-sentiment, in subjects he tested. Radin's experiments have been repeated by Dick Biermann in Holland who has obtained the same results. Biermann is presently conducting a search of similar psychological experiments that were conducted to find other effects, to see if the data from those independent experiments indicates the existence of the pre-sentiment effect. In a few cases, Biermann has discovered other experimenters whose data shows the same precognitive effect, although the scientists in those cases were not looking for evidence of precognition. It would seem that this experimental evidence 'proves' the existence of psi. If it does not demonstrate the existence of psi, then it poses a very serious challenge for any skeptic who wishes to challenge the results as false.

And finally, a new breed of mediums has become popular in the last few years. These mediums do not levitate, make flower bouquets appear out of nowhere, cause rain to fall in closed rooms, cause apparitions to appear, cause rappings, or cause any of the spectacular physical paranormal effects that mediums evoked during the era of modern spiritualism. These new mediums merely sense impressions from the dead relatives and friends of individuals, and interpret those impressions in a meaningful way for the recipients of the messages. The fact that they are only sensing impressions from the dead sounds vaguely familiar to the descriptions of remote viewers who sense impressions of their targets, but do not completely see their targets. In both cases, mistakes are made because the readers, whether mediums or remote viewers, are *interpreting* impressions rather than receiving direct and concise messages. However, in both cases there are sometimes very spectacular bits of information given that defy all odds and attempts at fraud. It is not the small bits of information, or even misinformation, given that prove or disprove the voracity of mediumship or remote viewing. It is the occasional spectacular result and the frequency of the spectacular results that seem to indicate the reality of these psi events.

Gary Schwartz has investigated several of these mediums during the past few years in his laboratory at the University of Arizona. In particular, he has investigated the claims of John Edward and James van Praagh, among others. In his tests, Schwartz has calculated that some of the mediums are correct nearly 80% of the time and he has taken extraordinary precautions to protect against fraud on the behalf of anyone concerned in the experiments. But Schwartz has noted that it is not the high percentages of hits that are conclusive. It is the occasional spectacular insights that are the most convincing, and such

insights are only convincing to the people that they affect. These spectacular successes cannot be measured in the laboratory, but they do indicate that the mediums are experiencing some form of extrasensory communication, most probably with the dead. However, these results beg the question, Does this prove survival? And that question cannot yet be answered.

Before this and similar questions can be answered, a theory or model of how psi works is needed. All of the above mentioned scientists have stated that they are in need of such a model to further their own research. Without a theory of psi, definitive experiments to 'prove' the existence of psi cannot be developed. A theory, or at least a good working hypothesis, is necessary to identify and eliminate the unknown variables that are now thought to be corrupting some experiments, so that individual variables can be tested.

Some theories have been suggested by the physicists. Helmut Schmidt and others have suggested quantum theories of psi. Beichler, Puthoff, Targ, Elizabeth Rauscher, Ed May, William Tiller and others have suggested hyper-dimensional space-time theories with either five or eight dimensions. Bohm's holographic model of the universe is also being used to explain psi and consciousness. These various theories may seem too different to offer a solution to the problem, but when considered within the context of unification and the search for a TOE, it seems evident that these theories are just different views of a single unified theory. Indeed, indications are that a true theory of psi is all but an accomplished fact.

The development of such a theory will not mark an end to parapsychology, although it is an important goal of parapsychology and parapsysics. On the contrary, a theory of psi will lead to new varieties of psychical experience as well as explain and refine the older varieties. A new theory of psi will be a beginning, not an end, and will allow us to explore new realms that have only been implied by the older varieties of psychical experience.

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